8005.c.12

TWO LETTERS

ON THE

SAVAGE STATE,

ADDRESSED

TO THE LATE LORD KAIMS,

BY

DAVID DOIG, L.L.D. F.S.S.A.

Master of the Grammar School, Stirling.

Οἱ Αρχαιοι των νυν οντων σεμνοτεροι. PLATO.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

M,DCC,XCII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND

GEORGE HORNE, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF NORWICH,

THE FOLLOWING LETTERS

ARE,

BY PERMISSION,

INSCRIBED,

AS A SMALL TESTIMONY OF RESPECT FROM ONE,

WHO,

THOUGH HE HAS NOT THE HONOR TO BE KNOWN TO HIS LORDSHIP,

REVERES HIS CHARACTER,

AND IS,

WITH GREAT SINCERITY,

HIS LORDSHIP'S

MOST OBEDIENT AND MOST FAITHFUL SERVANT.

Stirling, Jan. 1, 1792.

2.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE preceding Addreſs, which was meant as a tribute of unfeigned reſpect to living piety and worth, is now printed, as a teſtimony of gratitude to the memory of the venerable Prelate, by whom they were ſo eminently poſſeſſed.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ADVERTISEMENT.

OF the origin of letters addreſſed to an individual, however eminent, and now offered to the public at large, the reader will naturally expect ſome account. The account to be given is as follows:

THE author having, at their firſt appearance, read with attention LORD KAIMS's *Sketches of the Hiſtory of Man*, found in that

celebrated work ſome information and much entertainment; but he likewiſe found in it poſitions, which he thought ill-founded, and reaſonings which, to his mind, carried no conviction. The moſt important point, about which he differed in opinion from his Lordſhip, is the univerſality of *the Savage State* in the earlieſt ages of the world; a doctrine which the author of *the Sketches* has not only aſſumed as true, but which he has made the baſis of his philoſophy of human nature.

It is needleſs to obſerve, that he, who believes mankind to have raiſed themſelves from the ſtate of *abſolute ſavagiſm* to that of *civilization*, muſt entertain ideas of the powers of the human mind very different from thoſe entertained

entertained by him, who believes the race to have been originally civilized. This laſt mentioned opinion had long been the author's; and of courſe the theory of human nature, which he had framed to himſelf, was in many reſpects the reverſe of that which had ſo recently been detailed in *the Sketches*. Theories or opinions, which have been the reſult of much painful enquiry, no man is willing to give up as erroneous; but the author had the higheſt reſpect for the abilities of LORD KAIMS, and he was likewiſe aware of the partiality with which every man views his own notions. He therefore determined to bring the queſtion between them to an iſſue, ſatisfied that no ingenuity

can

can ſupport a ſuperſtructure raiſed upon a foundation which is not ſolid.

WITH this view he compoſed the firſt of the following letters, and conveyed it by a friend to the author of *the Sketches*, to whom he had not then the honor to be known. His Lordſhip received it in a manner characteriſtic of genius and liberality, and, after peruſal, ſolicited an interview with the writer; which accordingly took place. What paſſed upon that occaſion is of no importance to the reader, and therefore needs not be mentioned in this advertiſement. One conſequence of the interview was, that the ſecond letter, though written for that purpoſe, was never tranſmitted

ted to his Lordſhip, becauſe every thing of importance, which it contains, had been fully canvaſſed in converſation. So far however was LORD KAIMS from being offended, either at the ſtrictures contained in the letter on the doctrine of *the Sketches*, or at the earneſtneſs with which the author maintained his own opinion, that he admitted him into the number of his literary correſpondents, and honored him with a place in his friendſhip to the time of his death, which did not happen till ſeveral years after.

WHEN the letters were written, there was not the moſt remote deſign to make any other uſe of them than what has already been mentioned. But the author having lately ſhewn them

them to ſome perſons, to whoſe judgment he pays the higheſt deference, was by them adviſed to ſubmit them to the cognizance of the public.

THE advice of friends, he is ſenſible, is the common apology made by every trifling ſcribbler for obtruding his own crude notions upon the world; but in the preſent inſtance the advice of friends would have been diſregarded, had it not been enforced by an argument which it would have been criminal to reſiſt. It was obſerved, that if mankind were *originally ſavages*, the *Moſaic hiſtory* muſt unqueſtionably be falſe; and therefore the author was flattered with the hope, that his letters, of which the tendency is to overturn that

that hypotheſis, might be of ſome uſe to the cauſe of revelation. He has told LORD KAIMS, and the world, that he is no Clergyman, but he thanks God that he is a Chriſtian; and in his laſt moments he ſhall comfort himſelf with the reflection, that he has not lived in vain, if he ſhall, in any degree, have contributed to ſhew the neceſſity and the truth of divine revelation. In this cauſe the reaſonings contained in the following pages may not, perhaps, have the leſs influence, from their having been written with no ſuch view. The author's faith had not been ſhaken by LORD KAIMS, or any other advocate for the ſavage ſtate, and his ſole motive for addreſſing his Lordſhip was to procure an opportunity of diſcuſſing with a man

man of learning and genius an important queſtion in philoſophy and hiſtory.

THE writer is abundantly ſenſible that his letters are defective in many reſpects; but he is aware that no apology derived from the perpetual interruptions of a laborious employment, far leſs from the want of aſſiſtance, talents or capacity, will procure him acquittance before the tribunal of the public. To its award he cheerfully ſubmits, hoping that his attempt, however unſucceſsful, may at leaſt excite others better qualified for doing juſtice to the ſubject, to engage in the ſame career. He has only to add, that in writing theſe letters, he extended his views to ſeveral other moderns

moderns of high reputation in the literary world, as well as to the author to whom they were immediately addreſſed.

The author acknowledges himſelf obliged, for the preceding advertiſement, to the Reverend MR. GLEIG, *editor of the laſt volume of the works of* DR. JOHNSON, *from whoſe judicious remarks the letters themſelves, ſuch as they are, have derived conſiderable advantage.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

LETTERS

ON THE

SAVAGE STATE.

LETTER I.

December 20th, 1774.

My Lord,

THAT the following addreſs, from an abſolute ſtranger, may not, at firſt ſight, appear altogether aſſuming, I ſhall take the liberty to introduce it with an obſervation which may, I hope, in ſome meaſure contribute to atone for this abrupt intruſion. Your

LET. I.

LET. I. Lordſhip, who has already appeared ſo often in the character of an author, will readily enough recollect, that every new publication that appears implies a new appeal to the common ſenſe of mankind. The moment an author ſends his work abroad into the world, by that very act, he inveſts the public in general, and every private reader in particular, with a right to examine, canvaſs, approve, or diſapprove, according as capacity, judgment, or, perhaps, even caprice, may dictate. Should doubts or difficulties happen to occur in the courſe of the peruſal, the reader has, in my opinion, acquired a right to apply to the author, for his aſſiſtance, in order to ſolve theſe doubts, and explain theſe difficulties.

Having

LET. I.

Having been employed, for ſome months paſt, in peruſing your Lordſhip's *Sketches of Man*, I find myſelf ſtrongly inclined to make uſe of the prerogative which I have been juſt now claiming for readers in general. Allow me, however, before I come to exerciſe my privilege, to inform your Lordſhip, that, in peruſing your *Sketches*, I have been, in general, agreeably entertained, and uſefully inſtructed. This compliment (ſhould your Lordſhip happen to view it in that light), it is hoped, will give the leſs offence, when you are informed, that it is partly intended to introduce an application relative to doubts which have ariſen reſpecting the truth of ſome poſitions advanced and maintained in the courſe of your work.

LET. I. These your Lordship may, perhaps, consider as of no great importance: for my part, I must own, I view them in a very different light; because, should they happen to be false, or even problematical, a great part of that goodly structure, which your Lordship has reared with so much art and industry, must totter to the ground.

My Lord, when one proposes to raise a fair edifice, he cannot be too careful in examining the soil in which he proposes to lay the foundation. The basis of your *Sketches*, if I mistake not, rests upon the supposition, that, "In the earliest periods of time, mankind, in every part of the globe, were in a state of *absolute savagism*." This doctrine of the universal empire of the

ſavage ſtate, maintained by your Lord- LET. I.
ſhip, and by ſeveral other writers of no mean figure in the literary world, appears to me liable to many objections. As I am not ſo deeply verſed in the knowledge of antiquity, as to be able to obviate them, I muſt beg leave to ſubmit them to your Lordſhip's conſideration.

I am, my Lord, abundantly ſenſible, that the doctrine of the univerſal extent of the ſavage ſtate may plead very high antiquity. The antiquity of an opinion is not, however, always an infallible teſt of its truth, or, indeed, of its probability. Your Lordſhip muſt know, that many different ſyſtems, with reſpect to the origin and formation of *things*, were fabricated

LET. I. by the ancients, moſt of them abundantly futile and abſurd. One of the moſt popular, and, of conſequence, the moſt generally adopted, was that of [1] Mochus the Phœnician, the original author of the *Atomic Philoſophy*. This motley ſyſtem was improved by [2] Democritus, and, at length, carried on to full perfection by [3] Epicurus, whom the vulgar have ſet down as the author of that hypotheſis. According to this hopeful ſyſtem, man, like his brother Vegetables, was produced by his mother [4] Earth, happily tempered,

1 Strabo Caſmb. l. xvii. p. 757.
2 Diog. Laert. vita Democ.
3 Id. vita Epicuri.
4 "In nova tum Tellus herbas, virgultaque, primum,
"Suſtulit: inde loci mortalis ſecla creavit
"Multa, modis multis, varia ratione coorta.
"Nam neque de cœlo cecidiſſe animalia poſſunt,
"Nec terreſtris de ſalſis exiſſe lacunis.
"Linquitur ut merito maternum nomen adepta
"Terra ſit, e Terra quoniam ſunt cuncta creata."
LUCR. l. v. ver. 789.

and

and duly impregnated, by the heat of the ſun. The Θηριωδες, or Savage State, is, in my opinion, the genuine offſpring of this random *Coſmogony*. [5] "Men, newly ſprung from the boſom of the earth, wandered about for ages, in a ſavage forlorn ſtate. They ſallied out in ſmall ſcattered parties, to encounter their fellow-brutes, and ſearch for nutritive herbs and fruits, in the foreſts and deſerts." Indeed, my Lord, if we admit the former part of this hypotheſis, the latter will follow, by neceſſary conſequence. Man was a child of the vegetative earth;—man was of courſe an animal of the

LET. I.

5 Diod. Sic. Steph. l. i. p. 5. Euſeb. Prep. Evang. Steph. l. i. p. 22. From theſe authors, it appears, that Marcaſius Triſmegiſtus was the real author of this Coſmogony. He flouriſhed in Egypt at a very early period, and to him the Egyptians aſcribed the invention of almoſt all the arts and ſciences. See Clem. Alexand. P. St. l. vi. p. 757, Plato Tres Phæd. p. 1240.

LET. I. ſavage herd, and continued to be a ſavage[6], till numberleſs centuries had rolled over his head.

But, my Lord, we, who account for the formation of the univerſe, upon more liberal, and, I hope, upon more rational principles, are moſt certainly guilty of a groſs inconſiſtency, when we deny one part of the Epicurean hypotheſis, and adopt the other. We admit that our firſt progenitors were the immediate workmanſhip of Heaven; and, at the ſame time, affirm, that the Father of the univerſe unnaturally abandoned his new-formed infants, turning them abroad into an uncultivated world, naked, untutored,

6 See Lord Montboddo, David Hume, Eſq. Dr. Smith's Origin of Language, Monſ. de V. Condillac, and many others.

unſhel-

unſheltered orphans. My Lord, I am neither clergyman nor divine; but, viewing this matter with a philoſophic eye, the proceſs appears altogether inadmiſſible. I cannot help thinking that ſuch an inhuman conduct, give me leave to call it, is, in all reſpects, contrary to our natural ideas of the divine beneficence. It is certainly inconſiſtent with the fixed analogy of the divine adminiſtration, in every other inſtance that falls under our cognizance. LET. I.

But our ſuſpicions of the ſolidity of the ſyſtem juſt mentioned, will receive additional ſtrength, when we reflect maturely on the following conſiderations. Certainly there have been other ſages of equal antiquity, and perhaps of

LET. I. of ſuperior authority, *who have thought more nobly of our kind.* Will your Lordſhip give me leave to quote a famous Poet, who ſeems to have copied from ſome one or other of theſe more orthodox originals?—

" Sanctius his animal, mentiſque capacius altæ
" Deerat adhuc, et quod dominari in cætera
" poſſet—
" Pronaque cum ſpectent animalia cætera terram,
" Os homini ſublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
" Juſſit, et erectos ad ſidera tollere vultus 7."

Theſe lines are good poetry, and even ſome wiſe men have allowed them to be ſound philoſophy. Be that as it may, your Lordſhip need not be told that there were, in reality, very great geniuſes among the ancients, who entertained more liberal notions of the

7 Ovid. Met. l. i. v. 76, 84.

origin

origin of our race. They boaſt of LET. I. our being [8] the offſpring of Heaven; they tell you, that the Almighty *Protoplaſt* framed us with his immediate hand, or, at leaſt, by the agency of [9] miniſters appointed for that purpoſe. This hypotheſis ſeems to bear a pretty inviting aſpect; and I am convinced, that every man, who has formed ſuitable ideas of the dignity of our nature, would *devoutly* wiſh to ſee it confirmed. Here, then, there ſeems to ariſe a competition of rights. On the one ſide is ranged Mochus, Democritus, &c. with a numerous family of *aſſeclæ* among the Greeks and Romans, the redoubted champions of the dogma of the Savage State. On the other,

8 Cleanth. Hym. ad Jov.
9 Plato paſſ.

are

LET. I. are poſted almoſt [10] all the leaders of the other ſects, Greeks and Barbarians. Which of the two parties have reaſon and common ſenſe on their ſide, is humbly ſubmitted to your Lordſhip's deciſion.

If we appeal to the teſtimony of Hiſtory, the iſſue will, I believe, be found equally problematical. I will not pretend to ſay what credit may be due to the records of antiquity, or to tradition, kept alive by the monuments of hiſtory. The latter, I am perſuaded, your Lordſhip will abandon to fools and fanatics; with reſpect to the former, I do not remember to

[10] All the philoſophers of both academies; all the ſages of the Italian and Alexandrian ſchools; the Magi of Perſia; Brahmins of India; the Druids of Gaul, &c.

have

have ſeen a more judicious obſerva- LET. I.
tion than the following, which is exhibited by the prince of biographers;[11] "As geographers, in their deſcriptions of countries, thruſt into the fartheſt parts of their maps places with which they are not acquainted, and frequently add ſuch remarks as theſe: All beyond is ſandy deſerts, inhabited only by ſavage nations, or taken up with impaſſable mountains, deep moraſſes, and a frozen ſea; I may ſay of that which is more remote, All beyond is the region of prodigy and fiction, inhabited by poets and fabulous writers, concerning which, nothing certain or credible is known." Theſe are, indeed, invidious reflections; and

[11] Plutarch vita Theſ. ſub. init.

yet

LET. I. yet the author of them was a profound philoſopher, as well as a judicious and accurate biographer. If this obſervation ſhould happen to be juſt, the authority of the moſt ancient hiſtorians will be of little conſequence towards eſtabliſhing the univerſal empire of the Savage State, in the earlieſt ages of the world.

[12] Another hiſtorian of undoubted authenticity, and with whom your Lordſhip is pretty well acquainted, honeſtly acknowledges the fact with reſpect to the credibility of the hiſtory of Greece: "The accounts, ſays he, of tranſactions which preceded the Peloponneſian war, are very uncertain,

[12] Thucyd. l. i. cap. i.

on

on account of their remote antiquity." To theſe I muſt take the liberty to add another quotation, drawn from a [13] writer whoſe authority, in the preſent caſe, is, one would imagine, almoſt deciſive. "The hiſtory of the ancient Medes, Perſians, and Syrians, ſays he, is little to be depended on, becauſe ancient writers employed their talents rather to amuſe and entertain their readers with fable and fiction, than to inſtruct them in the knowledge of real facts." In ſhort, the obſervation which the [14] Roman Hiſtorian has made, with reſpect to the hiſtory of that people before the building of the city, or when it was to be

LET. I.

13 Strabo, l. ii. p. 507.

14 Liv. Pref. Quæ ante conditam condendamve Urbem, Poeticis magis decora fabulis, quam incorruptis rerum geſtarum monumentis traduntur.

built,

LET. I. built, may be extended to the moſt early hiſtories in general.

The greateſt [15] antiquarian Rome ever produced, in his diviſion of the periods of hiſtory, has rejected, as uncertain and fabulous, every record prior to the æra of the Olympiads, i. e. A. M. 3228.

The poets, your Lordſhip very well knows, were the moſt early hiſtorians among all the ancient nations. Theſe amuſing rhapſodiſts were enthuſiaſtically devoted to fable and fiction. Conſequently, Plato, the wiſeſt of philoſophers, has baniſhed them from his commonwealth, as the corrupters of

[15] Varro ap. Auguſt. de Civ. Dei.

mankind.

mankind. If, therefore, these propagators of fable and romance should countenance the existence of the universal prevalence of the Savage State, no regard will be paid to their frivolous inventions. LET. I.

The most ancient writers, more especially in the East, are overrun with allegorical descriptions. This was the original, and universal taste in these countries. The precepts of religion, the dogmas of philosophy, the maxims of polity, and the monuments of history, all breathed the allegorical spirit, and were involved in hieroglyphical darkness. The key to these allegories has, long since, been lost; consequently, every historical deduction derived from these sources must be dark and uncertain.

LET. I.

From theſe quotations, and analogical connections, I infer, that, although [16] Sanchoniathon, Beraſus, Manetho, and a few other ancient hiſtorians, whoſe fragments have been preſerved by Euſebius, Joſephus, Alexander Polyhiſtor, Cyncellus, [17] and ſome others of the more early Chriſtian writers, ſhould give evidence in favour of the univerſal extent of the Savage State, yet, after all, very little regard is due to their teſtimony.

On the other hand, my Lord, one might, I believe, draw together [18] a

16 Euſeb. Præp. Evang. l. i. pag. 23. informs us that this author blames the ſon of Thabion, and the latter hierologiſts for ſophiſticating all the genuine account of the origin of the univerſe, and of the inſtitutions of religion, with fiction and allegory.

17 Juſtin Martyr, Clem. Alexand. Arnobius, Epiphanius, Euſebius, Lactantius, Theophilus, Min. Fœlix, &c.

18 See Note preceding; to which we may add all the modern authors who have written in defence of revealed religion.

whole

whole cloud of witneſſes to confront the patrons of the Savage State. Theſe have maintained that there was, from time immemorial, a ſelect race,—a civilized ſociety, a centre of politeneſs, ſcience, and humanity eſtabliſhed in the world. Your Lordſhip will be ſoon convinced that I do not mean the nation of the Iſraelites: their influence, in the preſent caſe, I diſclaim on many accounts; I ſhall only beg leave to obſerve, that the *Moſaic coſmogony* is, at leaſt, as rational as the *Mochaic*; and that the authorities collected by the fathers of the Chriſtian church, as well as by modern Divines, in ſupport of the former, and the hiſtory connected with it, are as ancient, as numerous, and, perhaps, more conformable to the analogy of reaſon, than theſe

LET. I.

LET. I. produced againſt them by the advocates for the latter. Conſequently, theſe on the Moſaic ſide ought naturally to preponderate. Now, my Lord, when one views this arrangement with a philoſophic eye, he is apt to feel embarraſſed, as I do at preſent, and muſt have recourſe to your Lordſhip, for a clue to conduct his ſteps.

There is, I have been informed, ſtill another ſubterfuge left, by means of which ſome have attempted to account for the univerſal prevalence of the Savage State. It has been pretended, that ſince the formation of the terraqueous Globe [19], dreadful convul-

19 Plato, Tim. de Leg. l. iii. p. 804. I de Crit. p. 1100.

ſions

ſions have ſometimes happened, which have ſpread ruin and deſolation over the face of the earth. Famines, peſtilences, deluges, conflagrations, and various other diſaſters, have deſtroyed and ſwept away the far greater part of the human race. Inundations are repreſented as having been, in a peculiar degree, calamitous to mankind, in the earlieſt periods of time. Upon theſe diſaſtrous occaſions, we are given to underſtand, that only a canaille of ſhepherds, peaſants, and mountaineers, by the advantage of their elevated ſituation, had the good fortune to eſcape the general devaſtation. Theſe untutored ſavages were, according to them, *populi incrementa futuri*, the ſeeds and hopes of future generations. By ſuch

LET. I.

LET. I. dreadful cataſtrophes, ſay they, all traces of letters, arts, ſciences, mechanics, laws, religion, and civil government, were totally and irrecoverably loſt. It muſt however, my Lord, appear ſomewhat ſurpriſing, that not one ſingle divine or philoſopher had the good fortune to eſcape theſe grievous calamities. Were theſe diſaſtrous events properly authenticated, a ſuſpicion might indeed ariſe, that ſavagiſm might have been the conſequence, in ſome particular corners of the globe; but that their influence ſhould have been univerſally extended, ſhould ſeem to be a ſuppoſition by no means admiſſible. Your Lordſhip will, I doubt not, agree, that, in all probability, ſome few adepts in ſcience and philoſophy

ſophy muſt, by ſome means or other, have ſaved themſelves from the general wreck of their ſpecies. Theſe in proceſs of time muſt have diffeminated the knowledge of the ſciences, and, with it, the elements of civilization, over the whole community with which they were connected. The conſequence then is, that, admitting the exiſtence of theſe facts, the empire of the Savage State could neither have been univerſal, nor of long duration. Could we admit either the probability of the facts, or the truth of the poſition, that no veſtige of human knowledge ſurvived upon theſe occaſions, the effects aſſigned by the authors referred to might poſſibly have enſued. The cauſe would have been

LET. I.

LET. I. adequate to the effect, and the conclusion might, of course, be admitted, without hesitation. But the existence of the [20] fact being altogether uncertain, the consequences must stand in the very same predicament.

Your Lordship, convinced, I believe, of the futility of both the causes above assigned, as the source of universal Savagism, has selected another event, which, I must acknowledge, wears, at first sight, an aspect more promising. The confusion of tongues at the building of Babel you produce

20 The Greeks, in all probability, borrowed this idea from the Egyptians, among whom, in consequence of the annual inundation of the Nile, and the breaking down of the banks raised to prevent the incroachments of the sea, such events must have been frequent. See the fable of the submersion of the Atlantic island. Plato, Tim. p. 1015.

as the cauſe of that diſmal revolution. LET. I.
It will be found, I believe, my Lord, upon ſtrict examination, that the effects aſcribed to that unhappy event were, by no means, ſo conſiderable as generally repreſented. I am no great proficient, my Lord, in the knowledge of languages; yet even of the Oriental tongues I know ſufficient to convince me, that the difference of languages over a great part of Aſia and Europe, in the earlieſt periods of the world, muſt have been very inconſiderable. The [21] Hebrew, Phœnician, Egyptian, Arabian, Syrian, Chaldean, Armenian, and the languages of Aſia Minor were, originally different dialects of one common tongue. The Egyptian lan-

21 See Strabo, l. i. p. 41. Caſaub.

guage,

LET. I. guage, it must be acknowledged, is now, in a manner, lost; yet, that it was near a kin to the Hebrew is evident from such names of deities, persons, offices, and places, as occur in [22] sacred writ, most of which may, without much difficulty, be traced to a Hebrew original.

The languages of the Egyptians and Ethiopians were nearly allied, since the latter people [23] were a colony of the former, and the sacred letters of the one were the vulgar letters of the

22 Such Egyptian names as are preserved by Pagan writers, may likewise be explained from the Hebrew. See Plut. Isis, and Osiris, Iamb. de myst. Egypt. pass.

23 Diod. Sic. l. iii. p. 144, 145. Steph. Helio. Ethiop. l. x. p. 476. For the affinity among the Hebrew, Phœnician, Egyptian, Arabian, Chaldean languages, &c. one may consult Bochart's Phalec, Walton's Proleg. Hottenger's Smeyms, Orients; Gale's Court of the Gentiles, &c. &c.

other.

other. The original Ethiopians, were Cuſhim, that is, a colony of Chaldeans, and, conſequently ſpoke a dialect of the language of their mother colony. LET. I.

The Greek is a language compoſed of heterogeneous materials. It is obviouſly derived from the Hebrew, Phœnician, Egyptian, Syrian, Chaldean, and Thracian, with a conſiderable number of Perſian, and perhaps, even Celtic words interſperſed. I am convinced, [25] by repeated experiments, that it would not be altogether impoſſible, even at this day, to reſolve that noble language into its conſtituent

[25] Should your Lordſhip doubt of the truth of this aſſertion, I am furniſhed with ſpecimens of that kind, ſufficient to convince the moſt incredulous etymologiſt.

parts,

LET. I.

parts, or elementary particles, and thence to derive an irrefragable proof of the poſition in queſtion.

The Latin is a language made up of ſuch diſcordant ingredients, that the unremitting labours and moſt vigorous exertions of poets, orators, rhetoricians, and grammarians have not been able entirely to poliſh its native aſperity. They have, indeed, violently compreſſed it into the Greek model; but its rugged features are ſtill prominent, and the marks of violence are every where perceptible. It is a mixture of Aeolian, or rather Pelaſgic Greek, Etruſcan, Oſcan, Celtic, &c. It abounds with Hebrew, Phœnician, and even old Perſian words.

Theſe

Theſe laſt being much leſs diſguiſed than in the Greek, may be every where traced, with no great difficulty. The caſe could not indeed be well otherwiſe. The Pelaſgi, Etruſcans, Samnites, &c. and moſt of the other original inhabitants of Italy had actually emigrated from the eaſt, and, of conſequence, had introduced the dialects of their reſpective countries, ſituated in theſe quarters.

The Celtic, as has been demonſtrated, by writers deeply verſed in the [26] Gallic, [27] Iriſh, [28] Welch, and Armoric dialects, bears a very near

26 Monſ. Pelloulier, Chevalier Ihre, Eſſays lately by Cal. Valency and other members of the Society of Antiquaries, Dublin.

27 See Note preceding.

28 Lloyd Brit. Antiq. Bullel's Mem. de la langue Celt.

reſem-

LET. I. reſemblance to the eaſtern languages; [29] ſome have imagined that they have diſcovered Celtic words even in the heart of Tartary.

From this deduction I would infer, that the confuſion of tongues, at the building of the tower, was by no means conſiderable. It conſiſted only in a difference of [30] pronunciation, accent, utterance &c. If this was the caſe, (and that it actually was ſo, I think appears probable from the foregoing detail,) I would beg leave to infer, that the confuſion of tongues was a cauſe not powerful enough to have

29 Parſon's Rem. of Japhet, chap. vii p. 189.
30 The Hebrews calls it another, or a different Lip.

produced ſuch an important effect as the univerſal prevalence of the Savage State. LET. I.

And now, my Lord, having entered on the chapter of languages, I muſt beg your indulgence, while I hazard a few more ſtrictures on that part of your hypotheſis. You are pleaſed to affirm, that had it not been for the building of Babel there would never have been more than one language in the world. Now, my Lord, I am willing to allow that the Orientals have always been, and ſtill are, extremely tenacious of ancient cuſtoms, manners, opinions, &c. The ſame obſervation, I am convinced, will alſo hold good with reſpect to their languages.

LET. I.

guages. The veſtiges of an original, univerſal tongue are every where perceptible throughout theſe countries; eſpecially in the names of perſons, places, offices, religious ceremonies, and juridical inſtitutions; notwithſtanding the numberleſs migrations, mixtures, conqueſts, inventions, new opinions, and new ſects, which have in a manner conſpired to diſguiſe and transform them. The Hebrew ſcriptures are, in all probability, by much the moſt ancient compoſition now extant. In theſe there appear ſome conſiderable variations in the orthography of a few words, in the courſe of ſome centuries; a circumſtance which ſeems to indicate a tendency towards change even in that ſacred language.

The

LET. I.

The Greek, my Lord, being no primitive language, was certainly not affected by the confuſion of tongues at Babel. Yet what a mighty change, and at how early a period! If the inſcriptions mentioned by [31] Herodotus and [32] Pauſanias are genuine, the moſt palpable deviations from the original archetype muſt have been introduced in the courſe of three or four centuries. That celebrated language certainly loſt, and acquired a multitude of vocables, between the age of Homer and the æra of Æſchylus. The polite Athenians began to *Macedonize* as early as the age of Demetrius Phalereus.

[31] Lib. III. cap. liv.
[32] Attic. cap. xliii. page 106. Khuim.

LET. I.

The Romans, my Lord, were by no means a people given to changes. Their language, however, laid aſide its original, unpoliſhed form; and, in proceſs of time, aſſumed a new and more civilized aſpect. Polybius aſſures us, that, in his time, the antiquaries were not able to read the treaty concluded between the Romans and Carthaginians, in the reign of Tullus Hoſtilius. To mention modern tongues would be ſuperfluous. The perpetual changes to which theſe are ſubject every day, confirm the obſervations contained in the following lines;

" Ut ſylvæ foliis pronos mutantur in annos,
" Prima cadunt: ſic verborum vetus interrit
" ætas,
" Et juvenum ritu florent modò nata, vigent-
" que."

The

The inſtances above produced, beſides a hundred others, which will readily enough occur to your Lordſhip's recollection, render it, I think, highly probable, that there would have ariſen among men a variety of dialects, if not of languages, independent of the fatal cataſtrophe produced at the building of the tower of Babel.

But let us ſuppoſe the confuſion of tongues upon that occaſion as great as you would have it, and then let us examine whether it would have produced that univerſal degeneracy with which your Lordſhip has been pleaſed to charge it. Had the language of mankind been confounded, even in the moſt miraculous degree that can be imagined, it will not, I

LET. I. hope, be concluded, that all knowledge of arts, ſciences, letters, mechanics, &c. was at the ſame time abſolutely forgotten and extinguiſhed. If men were acquainted with theſe inventions, at a period prior to that fatal attempt, the ſame ideas muſt ſtill have exiſted in their minds, after the confuſion, that had been ſtored up there when they had all one language. It is not pretended that their intellectual powers were confounded at the ſame time with their languages. Such a revolution of the powers of the human ſoul is no where intimated; nor will your Lordſhip, I flatter myſelf, think of inſiſting on a point ſo improbable.

In the firſt place, I think it is by no means probable, that the whole human race

race was engaged in that attempt; nor, granting that they were, is there any good reaſon to ſuppoſe, that the puniſhment inflicted reached the whole ſpecies. In the ſecond place, it may be doubted, whether a miraculous interpoſition of Heaven was neceſſary to diſpoſe the deſcendants of Noah to emigrate to diſtant countries, rather than ſtarve on the plains of Shinar. Be that as it may, the people who inhabited the very ſpot where the ſcene of this cataſtrophe is laid, were, according to the moſt authentic records, the firſt who figured in the moſt ſublime ſciences. This circumſtance alone furniſhes a very ſtrong preſumption, that the natives of this region retained the remembrance of the antediluvian inventions; and that, of conſequence,

LET. I.

LET. I. they, at leaſt, never degenerated into the ſavage ſtate.

And now, my Lord, when I reflect upon the conſequences reſulting from the conſiderations produced in the preceding pages, I find myſelf under a kind of impulſe to hazard a poſition, which may, perhaps, at firſt ſight, appear ſomewhat ſurpriſing. This being the caſe, I muſt entreat the favour of your Lordſhip, not to throw away theſe inſignificant papers, till you have coolly and candidly examined the grounds upon which it is founded. My poſition is this; 'Had 'all mankind, without exception, been 'once in a ſtate of abſolute ſavagiſm, 'they would not only have continued 'in that ſtate, but would have ſtill 'ſunk

'ſunk lower and lower, till they had 'at laſt, in a manner, put off the cha- 'racter of humanity, and degraded 'themſelves to the level of the beaſts 'that periſh.' My Lord, there ſeems to be a principle laid in our nature, and, in a manner, interwoven with our frame and conſtitution. I ſee it ſpread itſelf over univerſal nature. Vegetables degenerate—animals degenerate—man is an animal, and muſt, of courſe, degenerate. In ſhort, were I to reaſon from the rules of analogy, as ſome deep divines have done, I ſhould fairly conclude, that man, once in a ſavage ſtate, would no more emerge from it, without the interpoſition of ſupernatural aſſiſtance.

LET. I.

LET. I.

Let us try, if your Lordſhip pleaſes, whether the unpopular theſis, propounded above, may be verified by fact, as well as by reaſoning from analogy and the appearances which ſurround us. Your Lordſhip very well knows, that all the learning, religion, laws, arts, and ſciences, and other improvements that have enlightened Europe, a great part of Aſia, and the northern coaſt of Africa, were ſo many rays diverging from two points, on the banks of the Euphrates and the Nile. In proportion as nations receded from theſe two ſources of humanity and civilization, in the ſame proportion were they more and more immerſed in ignorance and barbariſm. The Greeks, my Lord, according to the accounts tranſmitted by

by their own hiſtorians, were, in their primary condition, a nation of ſavages. Nor does it appear from aught that is now extant, that they had travelled one ſingle ſtage towards a ſtate of civilization, till the family of the Tetans firſt, and afterwards coloniſts from Egypt and Phœnicia, taught them the very elements of ſcience and urbanity. The Aborigines of Italy were in the very ſame predicament prior to the arrival of the Pelaſgi, and the colonies from Arcadia and other parts of Greece. The earlieſt inhabitants of Spain were generally ſavages, and had not advanced one ſingle ſtep towards civil life, when the Phœnicians began to extend their commerce into theſe quarters. The Gauls had made no conſiderable progreſs in the knowledge

LET. I. ledge of arts and ſciences when the Romans invaded and conquered their country. They were, at that period, the very ſame barbarians in temper and manners with their anceſtors who had croſſed the Alps, and colonized the north of Italy in the reign of Tarquin the Ancient. Our progenitors were ſcarce a degree above ſavages, when Cæſar made his firſt deſcent upon Britain. The Germans, when Tacitus compoſed his excellent account of their manners and character, were, according to that author, rather ſavages than barbarians.

If, my Lord, we proceed northward, and take a view of the Scandinavian tribes, we ſhall find them ſunk into abſolute ſavagiſm: nor have we any reaſon

reaſon to imagine, that they had taken one ſtep towards a cultivated ſtate, prior to the arrival of Odia, and his followers, from the Eaſt. Indeed, their progreſs in civilization is ſcarce perceptible, till they were enlightened by the rays of the Goſpel-ſun about the ninth or tenth century. The ſavages who iſſued from their woods and moraſſes, from the beginning of the fourth century, and downward, were as much ſavages as if they had ſprung, that moment, from the boſom of the earth. The Samaſides, Khamſchatkans, Laplanders, and the other tribes on the coaſt of the Frozen Ocean, are, at this very day, even below the ſavage ſtate: nor do they ſhew the ſmalleſt tendency to emerge from that unhappy condition.

LET. I.

The

LET. I. The modern Tartars are but one degree above ſavagiſm; nor do they appear to have moved one ſingle ſtage towards cultivation, in the ſpace of 3000 years. They are ſtill the ſame rude, untutored *canaille* deſcribed by Herodotus, Cteſias, Diodorus, Strabo, Procupius, and the other Greek and Roman hiſtorians. The Chineſe, notwithſtanding their high pretenſions to a poliſhed ſtate, acknowledge themſelves to have been unacquainted with arts, ſciences, religion, laws, and civil polity, before the appearance of their celebrated Foke.

And now your Lordſhip will certainly agree with me, that the whole continent of Africa, except a ſmall ſtrip of land along the ſouth ſhore of the

the Mediterranean, is ſtill buried in the moſt abject ſtate of ſavagiſm. Even that ſmall portion of that vaſt continent, which had actually learned the firſt rudiments of a civilized ſtate, was indebted to the Phœnicians, Carthaginians, and Romans, for the ſmall ſhare of that bleſſing which it formerly enjoyed. Here, again, we can diſcover no ſymptoms of a tendency towards culture and civilization. LET. I.

The Aborigines of North and South America were univerſally in the ſavage ſtate, at the time when the Spaniards firſt viſited theſe regions. Perhaps the two mighty empires of Mexico and Peru may be urged as exceptions to the general poſition; but I ſhall elſewhere endeavour to account for this deviation.

From

LET. I. From this detail, which, your Lordſhip well knows, may be vouched by the moſt unexceptionable authorities, I think it is obvious, beyond all poſſibility of contradiction, that all theſe nations, and ſocieties of men which were removed to a conſiderable diſtance from the grand ſources of civilization above-mentioned, had early degenerated into a ſtate of ſavagiſm. —That this degeneracy encreaſed exactly in proportion to their diſtance from thoſe two points—that none of thoſe nations who are known to have ſunk into that ſtate, ever became civilized, till they had renewed their correſpondence with nations, or individuals, who had derived light and knowledge from the oriental ſources —that previous to the opening of this

correſpondence, no one people diſ- LET. I.
covered the leaſt propenſion or tendency towards culture and civilization —that, conſequently, had all mankind been, at any one period, abſolute ſavages, they would have continued in that unhappy ſtate as long as the world exiſted—that if this train of reaſoning ſhould happen to be juſt, there muſt always have exiſted, in ſome part of the globe, a ſelect ſociety, a civilized race of men, among whom the knowledge of arts and ſciences was always preſerved, and from whom the bleſſings of civilization, and a cultivated ſtate of life, were, in proceſs of time, propagated to all the other nations, which at this day enjoy theſe invaluable benefits.

By

LET. I. By this time your Lordſhip, I imagine, will think yourſelf entitled to call upon me, to point out the origin of that ſavage ſtate, which I have acknowledged to have been, at one time, almoſt univerſal. In order to elucidate this point, your Lordſhip will pleaſe to reflect, that I have aſſerted above, that there did exiſt, time immemorial, ſomewhere in the eaſtern parts of the world, a ſociety of people who were never in the ſavage ſtate; but retained the remembrance of the arts and inventions which had been known among their anceſtors, previous to a general inundation which had ſwept away all the reſt of the human race. This ſociety, we are informed by pretty good authority, fixed its reſidence in the country of Shinar, after-

afterwards called Babylonia, or the country of the CHASIDIM. This region extended a conſiderable way along the eaſt bank of the Euphrates. In proportion as this ſociety encreaſed in numbers, colonies were obliged to emigrate, from time to time, and to remove to a greater diſtance from the original ſettlement, in queſt of ſubſiſtence and other conveniencies. Theſe colonies, I ſhould imagine, by neglect, by length of time, by diſtance, by hard labour neceſſary to procure the means of ſubſiſtence in a deſart, uncultivated world, by wars, by wickedneſs, and other like cauſes, gradually forgot, and, at laſt, abſolutely loſt every idea of the arts and improvements of the parent-country. In ſuch a various and fluctuating ſtate of

LET. I.

LET. I.

things, ſucceeding emigrants often drove out former planters, and theſe, in their turn, puſhed forward others who had planted ſettlements at a ſtill greater diſtance. In this manner they continued to expel, and impel one another, the ſtronger always ejecting the weaker, till the laſt, in order to avoid ſlavery or death, were forced to relinquiſh the fertile fields, and verdant plains of Europe and Aſia, and ſhelter themſelves amidſt the ſnowy mountains, gloomy foreſts, and frozen moraſſes of Scythia, Germany, Scandinavia, &c. Numberleſs inſtances of this hoſtile proceſs occur in the annals of modern ſocieties. The Britons, in order to avoid the fury of the bloodthirſty Saxons, withdrew to the barren, mountainous tracts of Wales. The Spa-

Spaniards who eſcaped the ſwords of the Moors took ſhelter among the faſtneſſes of Gallicia, Aſturia, and Biſcay. In this manner, theſe forlorn outcaſts, diſpoſſeſſed by colonies more powerful than themſelves, were obliged to move forward to inacceſſible regions, where having loſt all commerce with the more civilized tribes of mankind, they, in the courſe of a few centuries, degenerated into the ſavage ſtate. In this ſtate they actually continued till, by ſome means or other, a correſpondence was opened between them and their brethren of the South, who had acquired the knowledge of the arts of civilization at a more early period. LET. I.

This proceſs, my Lord, appears to me, natural, and might, I believe, be

LET. I.

illuſtrated and ſupported by a concurrence of numerous and unqueſtionable authorities. Perhaps I might obſerve, as an addition to the arrangement above laid down, that, when a country was overſtocked with inhabitants, it it became neceſſary, for the more convenient ſubſiſtence of the ſociety, to diſcharge a part of its ſuperfluous members. Upon theſe occaſions, the [37] *Verſacrum* would, probably, conſiſt of the ſcum of the nation. People who had acquired property, connexions, and intereſt, would remain in the original ſeat of the ſociety. The wretched, the uſeleſs, the vicious, in ſhort, the refuſe, and off-ſcourings of the com-

36 This would often happen in the early ages of the world, when agriculture was but imperfectly underſtood.

37 The Roman term for a part of a nation detached in queſt of a new ſettlement.

munity, would be driven out, and obliged to abandon their native ſoil, and go in queſt of new habitations. A colony, conſiſting of wretches of ſuch an unpromiſing character, your Lordſhip will allow, had but few ſtages to travel, before they arrived at the moſt confirmed ſtate of Savagiſm. LET. I.

Upon theſe principles, in my opinion, we may eaſily account for the origin and extent of the Savage State, without ſuppoſing, that ſuch a ſtate was, at one time, univerſally ſpread over all the human race. Perhaps inſtances might be produced, even in modern times, where a colony of untutored peaſants, tranſported to a foreign and very diſtant climate, cut off from all communication with their ori-

LET. I. ginal country, have, in proceſs of time, degenerated ſo far from their original ſtate, as to furniſh a proof of the poſition above laid down.

Your Lordſhip ſomewhere obſerves, "that the people who inhabit a grate-"ful ſoil, where the neceſſaries of life "are procured with little difficulty, are "the firſt who invent uſeful and in-"genious arts, and the firſt who figure "in the exerciſes of the mind." This obſervation is ſtrongly ſupported by the character of the Chaldeans and Egyptians above mentioned. But, then, theſe are the very nations who, according to my hypotheſis, derived the knowledge of uſeful and ingenious arts from their antediluvian progenitors; conſequently their early and univerſal acquaintance

acquaintance with the fine arts did not originate from their progreſs from a ſavage to a civilized ſtate, but from the care and culture of their anceſtors. But, my Lord, there are other regions of the globe, equally fertile, equally productive of the neceſſaries of life[38], whoſe inhabitants have been Savages time immemorial, and have not, at this day, moved one ſingle ſtep towards even the ſecond ſtage of improvement aſſigned in your ſyſtem.

On the other hand, the Athenians inhabited the moſt barren, and ungrateful region of Greece; and yet this very people carried every art and ingenious improvement to ſuch an amazing de-

38 Such are the inhabitants of a great part of Africa, of North and South America, and many of the iſlands lately diſcovered.

LET. I.

gree of perfection, that ſucceeding generations have been content to imitate, without pretending to equal their finiſhed productions. Again, there are numberleſs ſpots on the ſurface of the Globe, where the ſoil is neither ſo luxuriant as to beget indolence, nor ſo barren and ungrateful, as to depreſs the ſpirits by labour and poverty; and yet their inhabitants have continued in an uncultured ſtate even to this day. Many parts of Africa, as well as of N. and S. America, will fall under this deſcription. The ſubjects of the two Empires of Mexico and Peru had made but few improvements in arts and ſciences, at the arrival of the Spaniards; and theſe, inconſiderable as they were, had been ſtruck out only three centuries previous to that period. At the ſame

ſame time, it may be obſerved, that theſe people, at the period juſt mentioned, were rather ſtationary than progreſſive in their improvements.— The Norwegian colony, which ſettled in Iceland about the beginning of the eighth century, inhabited a moſt bleak and barren ſoil; and yet, my Lord, there is more than preſumptive evidence, that the fine arts were eagerly cultivated in that dreary region, at a time when the reſt of Europe was ſunk into the moſt deplorable ſtate of ignorance and barbariſm. LET. I.

Theſe inſtances, my Lord, to which many more might be added, would almoſt tempt one to conclude, that neither the fertility, nor the mediocrity, nor, indeed, the ſterility of the ſoil, contribute

LET. I. contribute in any conſiderable degree, towards depreſſing, retarding, or accelerating the intellectual exertions of the inhabitants reſpectively.

One reflexion, I muſt own, has, in a manner, obtruded itſelf upon me, in the courſe of this diſquiſition; it is a reflection ſuggeſted by analogy, and may, I imagine, be authenticated by the evidence of hiſtory. Wherever mighty empires, numerous ſocieties, or commercial ſtates, were planted, good order, civilization, and an appearance of regular polity, were introduced at an early period. The reaſon of this phœnomenon may be readily diſcovered. In ſuch flouriſhing and populous ſocieties, the arts and improvements of the original ſociety had never been entirely obliterated. Their

Their numbers, diſcipline and multiplied reſources, ſecured them from theſe revolutions, which affected ſmaller and leſs powerful communities. Let us now try, if your Lordſhip pleaſe, whether this wayward poſition may not be ſupported by an induction of facts. LET. I.

The Chineſe, the Indians, the Aſſyrians, the Ethiopians, the Egyptians were powerful and populous ſtates: of courſe we find them civilized in a high degree, at a period even prior to the annals of hiſtory. The ſame obſervation may be applied to the Thracians, and to the inhabitants of Aſia Minor. The Phœnicians were a commercial people; conſequently, we find them highly poliſhed at the æra of the Trojan

LET. I.

Trojan war; and if we admit the fragments of [40] Sanchoniathon to be genuine, theſe people were civilized long before that period. The [41] Pelaſgi and Etruſci, if we may believe both the Greek and Roman Hiſtorians, were populous and mighty nations; and, accordingly, we find them ſkilled *in all laws, human and divine*, time immemorial.

On the other hand, I believe it will be found, that the ſmaller tribes and detached clans, and ſuch people as inhabited iſlands, peninſulas, or remote corners of the earth, ſunk early into the ſavage ſtate. In ſhort, I imagine it

39 See Iliad and Odyſſ. paſſ.
40 Euſeb. Preap. Evang. l. 1. page 13. Steph.
41 Dion. Hal. Antiq. Rom. l. 1. ſub. init. &c.

will

will hold, in general, that ſuch bodies of people as were cut off from all intercourſe with the more populous and flouriſhing nations, by ſome natural barrier, ſuch as mountains, ſeas, deſarts, or foreſts, were, conſequently, ſubjected to the ſame calamity in the moſt early ages. None of theſe tribes, for aught that appears, began to emerge, till they once more renewed their correſpondence with their more poliſhed neighbours. LET. I.

The natives of Italy were ſtill uncivilized, when the Thracians and Natolians were learned and refined. The Trojans are deſcribed by Homer, as much farther advanced in the knowledge of muſic, painting, embroidery, architecture, metallurgy, and every other

LET. I. other refinement than the Greeks. Again, the Greeks who inhabited the continent were, in the age of [42] Homer; much more cultivated than the natives of the iſlands. The Gauls, in Cæſar's time, had made ſome ſmall progreſs in the arts of civil life, while their neighbours, the inhabitants of the Britiſh iſles, were ſtill immerſed in ignorance and barbariſm. The northern inhabitants of Europe and Aſia ſeparated from their more poliſhed brethren of the ſouth, by the German ocean, the Palus Mœotis, the Euxine, or Black ſea, mount Caucaſus, and the Caſpian ſea, have never advanced beyond what your Lord-

[42] That poet in many parts of the Odyſſey repreſents the inhabitants of the Grecian iſlands as a race of pirates and freebooters; nay the profeſſion was even deemed honourable. See alſo Thucyd. l. i. cap.

ſhip

ſhip is pleaſed to call the [43] Paſtoral State.[44] Not a few of them who have burſt theſe barriers, and ſeated themſelves in the moſt fertile regions of Aſia, and mingled themſelves with the poliſhed inhabitants of theſe happy climes, after a number of centuries are paſt, ſtill retain their native ferocity of temper, and, in ſpite of the influence of climate and example, bewray their original by acts of barbarity.

There appear, my Lord, ſome ſtrong preſumptions, that moſt of the

43 I know that the gentlemen, who maintain the doctrine of the Savage State, uſe to divide the progreſſive improvements of human ſociety into the Hanleng, the paſtoral and agriculture ſtate. A more commodious diviſion, I think, would be into the ſavage, barbarous, and civilized ſtate.

44 The Moguls, Turks, &c.

nations

LET. I. nations which, according to your ſyſtem, gradually emerged from the ſavage condition, in conſequence of the progreſſive exertions of their intellectual powers, actually owed the attainment of that bleſſing to a very different cauſe. The Providence of Heaven, in pity to the human race, has, at different times, and in different countries, raiſed up ſome perſons endowed with ſuperior talents, or, to uſe the language of poetry, ſome heroes, demi-gods, or god-like men, who, by uſeful inventions, legiſlation, religious inſtitutions, and moral arrangements, ſowed the firſt ſeeds of civilization among the hordes, of wandering diſunited barbarians. Thus, we find, the Chineſe look up to their Fohee; the Indians to Brahma; the Perſians to Zerduſht,

Zerduſht, or Zoroaſtres; the Chaldeans to Oanes; the Egyptians to their Thoth, or Thyoth, or Mercury Triſmegiſtus; the Phœnicians to Melicerta, or Hercules Antiquiſſimus, the Scandinavians to Odin, or Waden and his Aſæ, the Italians celebrate their Janus, and Saturn, and Picus, and, in fine, the Peruvians acknowledge Manco as the author of the little refinements by which they were diſtinguiſhed from the reſt of the tribes on the continent of America. LET. I.

Theſe venerable ſages, according to the traditional hiſtory of their reſpective countries, humanized the minds, poliſhed the manners, and aboliſhed the lawleſs, licentious habits of their

LET. I. countrymen. This change was not produced by ſlow and inſenſible degrees, nor by a tedious progreſs through many proceſſive ſtages; but all at once, as it were by an inſtantaneous energy. Perhaps, my Lord, theſe events may not be altogether ſo fabulous, as they appear to be miraculous. Your Lordſhip will probably recollect, that Arſaces, the firſt Monarch of the Parthians, in the courſe of a few years, raiſed that nation from a contemptible province of the Syro-macedonian empire, to the ſovereignty of the Eaſt. The celebrated Timor, or Tamerlane, is another inſtance of the like inſtantaneous elevation. The Peruvian legiſlator was equally ſucceſsful in producing an immediate

immediate change in the manners of his ſubjects. The ſtate of Ruſſia, before the reign of Peter the Great, and towards the concluſion of that monarch's life, will naturally occur to your Lordſhip's memory, upon the preſent occaſion.

From theſe inſtances I would beg leave to infer, that, even admitting that it were poſſible to produce inſtances of nations which have arrived at a ſtate of perfect civilization, without any intercourſe with people already civilized, this effect was not produced by the gradual openings of the human underſtanding, in a long courſe of ages, but by the elevated genius of ſome ſingle perſon, or com-

LET. I. bination of perſons, who ſeem to have been raiſed up by a peculiar diſpoſition of Providence, and furniſhed with endowments almoſt ſupernatural, for the purpoſe of qualifying them for civilizing *a rude, unpoliſhed world.*

Upon the whole, I am perſuaded your Lordſhip would oblige not a few of your unlearned readers, as well as myſelf, would you be condeſcending enough to point out ſome one ſtate, nation, or ſociety which was once confeſſedly compoſed of ſavages, and did actually, without foreign aſſiſtance of any kind, by the gradual exertion of its internal powers, after paſſing ſucceſſively through all the ſteps and ſtages ſpecified in your *Sketches*, at

at length arrive at a ſtate of complete humanity and civilization. LET. I.

Your Lordſhip may well be ſurpriſed at an addreſs of this nature from one who has not the honour of *your acquaintance*. You may, I am afraid, conſtrue it into aſſurance, petulance, or, perhaps, ſomething worſe. If ever I ſhould have the honour to be known to your Lordſhip, I flatter myſelf, you will ſoon be convinced, that none of theſe unſeemly traits mark my character. Modeſty alone has induced me to tranſmit theſe ſtrictures without either ſubſcribing my name or place of abode. After all, if by ſome fortunate accident, I ſhould happen to underſtand that this trifle has met your Lordſhip's approbation, you may poſ-

LET. I. ſibly hear from me again upon another occaſion.

I am, my LORD,

With the greateſt reſpect,

Your LORDSHIP's

Moſt obedient and humble ſervant.

4 NO 54

November 5th, 1776.

LETTER II.

March 12. 1775.

My Lord,

EVER ſince I did myſelf the honour to write to your Lordſhip, in November laſt, I have, at times, been turning my thoughts towards the ſtrictures contained in that letter. In the courſe of my reflections, I imagine I have ſtumbled upon ſome few facts which may tend to elucidate, perhaps,

LET. II.

LET. II. to corroborate the poſitions there advanced. Theſe, I now take the liberty to convey to your Lordſhip; hoping you will canvaſs them with the ſame candor and impartiality you did the former.

In my laſt I obſerved, that the larger and more populous nations, as far as hiſtory can trace them, appear in a high ſtate of cultivation and refinement. I ſhall now beg leave to purſue that argument a little farther, endeavouring to confirm it by an induction of circumſtances reſulting from the character of ſome of the moſt conſiderable nations which figure in hiſtory, at a very early period.

The Cuſhim, or Ethiopians, were early a conſiderable nation. Accord-

ing

ing to the moſt authentic hiſtorians, theſe people had learned the arts of civilization, even more early than the [1] Egyptians themſelves. From them, the people, laſt mentioned, borrowed their [2] ſacred characters. Some of their deities were of [3] Ethiopian extraction; and many of their religious inſtitutions were copied from originals of that country. Their reputation for piety, juſtice, and integrity of manners, was high even in the heroic ages. [4] Homer, your Lordſhip very well knows, ſends his divinities to banquet and carouſe with the Ethiopians; and always diſtinguiſhes them by the epithets of the *moſt juſt, and the*

[1] Diod. Sic. l. iii. p. 101. Steph.
[2] Idem. ibid. Heliod. Ethiop. l. x. p. 476.
[3] Diod. Sic. ubi ſupra.
[4] Iliad, paſſim.

moſt

LET. II.

moſt devout of men. This character undoubtedly imports a high degree of cultivation; and, if this were their character in the age of Homer, I ſhould imagine it would be a difficult taſk to point out a more early period when theſe people were abſolute ſavages.

The Troglodytes, my Lord, notwithſtanding they were ſituated in the neighbourhood both of the Egyptians and Ethiopians, (two nations in a high ſtate of civilization) continued in the ſavage ſtate till the age of Dionyſius, who wrote the Periegeſis, and perhaps much longer[5]. I mention this inſtance as

5 King James I. of Scotland, with a view to improve the fiſheries of his kingdom, brought a colony of fiſhermen

as it were, by the way, becauſe it would naturally lead one to ſuſpect that there is not, in human nature, that characteriſtical propenſity towards a cultivated ſtate, which your Lordſhip, as well as many other celebrated characters of the preſent age, ſeem to aſcribe to it. LET. II.

The [6] Egyptians, as appears from the moſt genuine accounts, have been a civilized people from the very beginning. But, neither they, nor their brethren the Chineſe, ſeem to

men from Holland, and planted them on the ſouth coaſt of Fife. Theſe coloniſts were, it ſeems, in a barbarous ſtate when they arrived in Scotland. They have continued exactly in the ſame ſtate without the ſmalleſt improvement to the middle of the preſent century, or thereabouts.

[6] Diod. Sic. account of the original ſtate of that people is altogether fabulous. Herodotus l. ii. repreſents them as in a high ſtate of cultivation in the earlieſt ages. Manetho and Ptolemy, their own hiſtorians, agree with the Greek in this point.

have

LET. II.

have carried the fine arts to any conſiderable degree of perfection. [7] Their architecture was a *rudis, indigeſtaque moles:* it indicated a clumſy, ill-proportioned, cumbrous magnificence, without order, ſymmetry, or taſte. [8] In muſic, painting, ſtatuary, ſculpture, &c. they were abſolutely ſtationary for a ſpace of 3000 years. This feature, my Lord, ſeems to intimate rather a *vis inertiæ*, than an innate propenſity towards progreſſive improvement.

Your Lordſhip produces an inſtance of a republic near the centre

7 See Bp. Pocock, Dr. Shaw, Rich. Ohil. l'Abbe Paw paſſ. Monſ. Savary, Volney, &c. &c.

8 Plato de Leg. l. ii. p. 782. There was a law in Egypt prohibiting all innovations in muſic and painting, which probably extended to the other fine arts.

of

of Africa, arrived at a very uncommon degree of improvement. This ſingle inſtance will not prove much to the purpoſe: 1ſt, becauſe its exiſtence depends upon the authority of travellers and writers of voyages, on whoſe veracity we cannot always build an hypotheſis with certainty. Theſe, my Lord, are a claſs of hiſtorians againſt whoſe authenticity I have always entertained unſurmountable prejudices. 2dly, Even granting that ſuch a ſociety does actually exiſt, its attainments may have been greatly exaggerated by the luxuriant imagination of thoſe who either made, or fancied they made, the diſcovery. A penchant towards the marvellous is natural to moſt men, and none are more likely to indulge it than the ordinary race

LET. II.

race of travellers and their biographers. 3dly, The founders of this colony may have been Ethiopians or [9] Egyptians; or may have emigrated from the coaſt of Barbary, and fixed their habitations in that parched region. Upon the whole, no general concluſion can fairly be deduced from one ſingle inſtance, however well authenticated. The other nations of that continent, your Lordſhip will allow, have ever been, and ſtill are, in a ſtate very little ſuperior to the brute creation.

And now, my Lord, we will, if you pleaſe, bid adieu to the wilds, and to

9 We learn from Herodotus, l. ii. cap. 30. that, in the reign of Pſammeticus, a great number of the Egyptians abandoned their native country and emigrated into Ethiopia. Some people have imagined that thoſe fugitives founded that colony.

the

the wild men of Africa. We will tranſport ourſelves to the verdant plains of Aſia, where more delightful proſpects open to our view. Here we meet populous cities, flouriſhing ſtates, and extenſive empires, cultivated and improved at a very early period. The [10] Phœnicians, [11] Syrians, [12] Chaldeans, [13] Arabians, [14] Medes, Perſians, and Indians, &c. appear to have been civilized nations from the beginning of time. My Lord, I am well aware that ſome ancient [15] hiſto-

10 See the fragments of Sanchoniathon ap. Euſeb. P. E. l. i. alſo the ſacred hiſtory paſſ.

11 See Univerſal Hiſt. folio, vol. I. chap. 5. p. 3. alſo the Sacred Hiſtory.

12 See Beroſus ap. Syncellum, Alex. Polyh. &c. agree that the Chaldeans before Xiſnthrus, i. e. the univerſal deluge.

13 Sale's prelim. diſcourſe, Pocock's ſpecimen, &c.

14 D. Hyde de relig. vet Perſarum paſſ.

15 Beroſus and Manetho were nearly contemporaries. The former wrote the hiſtory of the Babylonians, the latter of the Egyptians. They ſeem to have been rivals in magnifying the antiquity of their nations reſpectively.

rians,

LET. II.

rians, either ſeduced by the love of the marvellous, or with a view to gratify the vanity of their countrymen, have carried up the antiquity of their nations, reſpectively, to a period of time beyond all credibility. The propenſion to entertain and ſurprize the reader with fiction and romance, every where viſible in the annals of the writers, would deſtroy their credibility, at leaſt with reſpect to events of remote antiquity. Hence it will follow, that, though ſome authors of the complexion above deſcribed, ſhould actually aver, that civilized ſocieties gradually emerged from the [16] ſtate we are conſidering, very little credit is

16 The authors of antiquity who ſuppoſe the ſavage ſtate, probably derived their opinions from the Phoenician coſmogony.

due

due to their teſtimony. But to re- LET. II.
turn.

The Indians have been a civilized and poliſhed [17] nation at all times, and no period can be aſſigned when they arrived at that ſtate. The character in which they are repreſented by [18] ancient hiſtorians is exactly conformable to that of the [19] preſent race. Indeed, the Orientals are a people by no means fond of change. They revere the cuſtoms and inſtitutions of the elders, and nothing but violence can induce them to abandon them. And this ſteadineſs of temper, and inflexibility of character furniſh a ſtrong preſump-

17 Diod. Sic. l. v. p. 183. & ſeq.
18 Diod. Sic. Cteſias, Juſtin, &c.
19 See Mr. Halhed's pref. to his Code of Gentoo laws, and Col. Dow's Hiſtory of Hindoſtan, &c.

LET. II.

tion, at leaſt, that the natives of theſe countries, ſuppoſing them once in the ſavage ſtate, would not have felt a ſtrong inclination to relinquiſh it.

My Lord, wonders are every day circulated of the improvements of the Chineſe. Theſe extravagant reports, your Lordſhip very well knows, have been fabricated by certain perſons to anſwer certain purpoſes. It now appears, from more authentic accounts, that theſe hyperbolical details are not to be adopted, without many grains of allowance. Upon the whole we are ſure that this wonderful people have been in a civilized ſtate 2,000 years at leaſt. With reſpect to improvements in arts and refinement, it does not appear that they have made any perceptible

ble progreſs. On the contrary, by a comparison of their moſt ancient and their lateſt productions, there is reaſon to conclude that they have been, in a manner, ſtationary during this long period. What is the concluſion? The moſt obvious that occurs to me is the following; namely, 'that had 'a people of their unelaſtic genius 'been once placed in the ſavage 'ſtate, or indeed in any other ſtate 'different from that in which we 'now find them, they would probably 'have remained in that ſtate as long 'as their nation exiſted.' LET. II.

The Scythians, my Lord, were a great and mighty people. The far greater part of thoſe numerous and widely extended tribes always have

LET. II.

been, and ſtill are, barbarians. Among theſe people, however, we find in the very earlieſt ages ſome diſtinguiſhed by their [20] piety and profound ſkill in the myſterious inſtitutions of the pagan religion. Theſe were, according to ſome [20] authors, the people who firſt eſtabliſhed the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi. The [21] Hyperboreans were the firſt who chanted the ſacred hymns at Delos. Others were celebrated for their [22] juſtice and hoſpitality. It then appears that all the Scythians were never in the ſavage ſtate; and that ſuch of them as were originally in the barbarous ſtate are at this day barbarians.

[20] Herod. l. v. cap. 3.
[21] Pauſ. l. x. cap. 5. p. 309.

The

LET. II.

The Thracians were a very numerous and powerful tribe. They were at an early period not only a civilized but even a learned people. [22] The Myſians, a tribe of European Thracians, were an abſtemious people; they drank no wine—they abſtained from animal food—they were highly renowned for their juſtice and piety—they were, one would think, a nation of Pythagoreans. The Thracians, ſays [23] Pauſanias, were better ſkilled in the ceremonies of religion than the Macedonians their neighbours, and at the ſame time more careful and exact in the performance of them.

[22] Herod. l. iv. cap. 35. Solinus, cap. 21.
[23] Id. lib. ix. cap. 28. p. 472.

LET. II.

Your Lordſhip no doubt knows that the Greeks themſelves, in ſpite of all their boaſted originality, owed the elements of civilization to their Thracian neighbours. [24] Orpheus, Thamyras, Eumolpus, and perhaps Linus, were ſages of Thracian extraction. Theſe were the earlieſt luminaries of Greece. From theſe ſame Thracians, the Greeks derived both their [25] muſic and muſical inſtruments. Parnaſſus, Helicon, Pieros, Pimpla, Lebethros, and all the other ſcenes of that country, ſacred to the Muſes, were originally [26] inhabited by Thracians. From this deduction we may juſtly infer that the people in

24 See Blackwell's Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer; Banier's Myth. and many others.
25 Strabo, l. x. p. 471.
26 Idem, ibidem.

queſtion

queſtion were learned and civilized, at a time when the Greeks were not yet emancipated from ſavagiſm. LET. II.

Theſe poliſhed Thracians, in the courſe of a few centuries, loſt all taſte for theſe exalted improvements. By addicting themſelves to bloodſhed and and rapine, they at laſt degenerated into ignorance and barbariſm. A Thracian deemed it a diſhonour to be able to [27] underſtand letters. [28] Drunkenneſs and venery became faſhionable vices. This inſtance of national degeneracy brings acroſs me a new reflection, which, according to the light in which things appear to me, bears no

[27] Æliani Hiſt. var. l. viii. cap. 6.

[28] This circumſtance is too well known to ſtand in need of authorities.

LET. II. favourable aſpect towards your Lordſhip's hypotheſis.

Theſe once enlightened Thracians, now ſunk into barbariſm, continued ſupine and inactive in that ſtate for centuries. I know not whether even their commerce with the Greeks arouzed the *vis inertiæ*, the lethargic ſlumber which had ſtupified their faculties. Now, my Lord, ſhould we for once ſuppoſe theſe barbarians of Thrace for ever ſequeſtered from every ſource of cultivation, except the domeſtic ones, may we not conclude by the rules of analogy that they would have remained barbarians to the end?

I be-

LET. II.

I believe, my Lord, with reſpect to the character of nations, one may ſafely adopt the following maxim; viz, 'that ſcarce any people, who 'have once eminently diſtinguiſh-'ed themſelves on the ſtage of the 'world, and have acquired celebrity 'by the exerciſe of arts and arms, 'and have afterwards ſunk into bar-'bariſm and imbecillity, in conſe-'quence of riches, luxury, or effemi-'nacy, have ever recovered their priſ-'tine vigour, and riſen once more to 'ſplendor and eminence.'

Nec vera virtus, cum ſemel excidit,
Curat reponi deterioribus.

HOR.

Your Lordſhip will give me leave to cor-

LET. II.

corroborate this poſition by a few inſtances deduced from fact.

The Egyptians, my Lord, a highly poliſhed nation, after a few unſucceſsful ſtruggles to recover their independence, ſunk into everlaſting debility and inſignificance——The illuſtrious Greeks, thoſe mirrors of elegance, refinement, ſcience, and martial ſkill, after blazing like a meteor a very few centuries, ſet all at once never more to riſe—Italy, once the happy mother of heroes and demigods, has long been the nurſery of fiddlers, painters, plaſtics and ſtatuaries. Have ever the ſons of imperial Rome, ſunk into luxury, ſloth and effeminacy, made one brave exertion to recover their

their priſtine vigour? Under a ſucceſſion of the moſt [29] virtuous and heroic princes that ever ſwayed a ſceptre, the old Roman vigour did not revive. When will the Danes once more furniſh a ſpecimen of that martial proweſs which, under the Norman chiefs, made all Europe tremble? Will ever Portugal give birth to a race of [30] heroes like thoſe who dared, by doubling the Cape, to explore thoſe regions which greet the riſing ſun, and forced both Africa and India to pay homage to the Luſitanian Croſs? The martial ardor, which animated the Spaniards in the golden days of Charles V. evaporated under Philip his ſon and ſuc-

29 For a ſpace of eighty years from Nerva to Commodus.

30 See Mickle's Introduction to his excellent tranſlation of the Luſiad.

ceſſor.

LET. II.

ceſſor. The united efforts of the heroes of Bourbon have not yet been able to rouze the dormant flame of Caſtilian valour.

My Lord, I have inſenſibly been led into the declamatory ſtyle; that is, however, a circumſtance of little importance, provided the aſſertions ſhould happen to be true. For my own part, I cannot at preſent recollect one exception from the general poſition. Your Lordſhip can, I doubt not, readily aſſign the phyſical or moral cauſe of this ſtriking phænomenon. My province is only to produce the facts as grounds of ſuſpicion, that the tendency towards progreſſive improvement, implanted in the human ſoul, is not altogether ſo vigorous as modern

dern philoſophers generally repreſent it. LET. II.

Again, my Lord, the reflection communicated naturally gives birth to another, which, in my opinion, is abſolutely adverſe to gradual and progreſſive improvement. Indeed, it appears to me rather more inconſiſtent with it than any other fact that has been brought forward in the courſe of this diſquiſition. It has often [31] been obſerved by perſons who had the beſt opportunities of exact information, that there is, in ſavage nations, a rooted averſion to a civilized mode of life. Theſe wretches are found to

[31] For this we need only appeal to the hiſtorians who have recorded the diſcoveries of the Spaniards, Portugueſe, French and Engliſh in N. and S. America.

revolt

LET. II.

revolt againſt an arrangement which abridges their liberty, controls their appetites, and ſubjects them to painful and, as they think, unneceſſary reſtraints. We find that it has been a difficult, and often a dangerous undertaking, to reclaim mankind from a ſavage courſe of life. [32] The charms of muſic, the allurements of poetry, the moſt impaſſioned ſtrains of rhetoric, have been found neceſſary to ſoften their rugged and intractable ſpirits. Where theſe means were ineffectual, as they too often were, [33] legiſlators had recourſe to the pretence of divine communications, as a moſt

[32] Theſe were the means which, according to the writers of Greece and Rome, were employed by Orpheus, Linus, Amphaion, &c.

[33] Minos, Lycurgus, Numa, &c.

powerful engine for ſubduing ignorant and ſuperſtitious minds. Theſe facts are too ſtubborn to be denied, or even controverted, and from them we may conclude, that there does not exiſt in the nature of ſavages that principle, that inſtinctive or operative power, which is neceſſary for inclining and diſpoſing them to embrace a cultivated ſtyle of life. LET. II.

Perhaps, my Lord, one might even puſh the argument a little farther, by obſerving that there appears in ſavages, even after they have been reduced to a civilized ſtate, a very ſtrong propenſity to return to their former mode of living. It is an indiſputable fact, that the Hottentots, who have been kidnapped in their infancy

LET. II. fancy by the Dutch at the Cape, no ſooner diſcover their country and extraction, than they lay plots for eloping from their maſters, in order to join their kindred and countrymen. Theſe miſerable creatures prefer the ſheepſkin, the hunger and garbage of their original country to all the finery and luxury of their civilized maſters. The negroes imported from the African coaſt, let their purchaſers be ever ſo mild and indulgent, always regret that independence, that uncontrouled licentiouſneſs, which they remember to have enjoyed in their former condition. The American ſavages exhibit the very ſame temper, and, unleſs they are detached by the motives of religion and the fear of damnation, would generally prefer ranging the wilds of their

their native region, though expoſed to hunger and all the fatigues of the chace, to the moſt luxurious banquets and the moſt enchanting enjoyments of the poliſhed Europeans. Such, my Lord, are the charms of independence, and a licentious mode of life! But without pretending to moralize on this ſtrange, yet characteriſtical, ingredient in the human conſtitution, I ſhall only obſerve, that it appears rather inimical to your Lordſhip's ſcheme.

Your Lordſhip will pleaſe to recollect, I inſinuated in my laſt, that numerous ſocieties and powerful monarchies are generally repreſented in a cultivated ſtate, the very firſt time they make their appearance in hiſtory. This obſervation may, I think, with

LET. II.

great propriety be applied to the two flouriſhing empires of Mexico and Peru. The origin of the former is but imperfectly known. The latter owed its origin and civilization to the diſtinguiſhed abilities of one ſingle perſon. There does not appear to have exiſted among thoſe people the ſhadow of a diſpoſition towards ſhaking off the ſavage ſtate, when that legiſlator firſt made his appearance among them. It is certain, however, that their civilization was the workmanſhip of that ſingle hero, and that, without his endeavours, they would have continued like the other tribes of that continent, which never felt the influence of his genial rays. If this were the caſe, (as moſt certainly it was) no

argument

argument in favour of your Lordſhip's ſyſtem can be drawn from that quarter. LET. II.

But, after all, my Lord, taking the Peruvians in the ſtate in which we find them at the arrival of Pizarro, it may be doubted, whether theſe nations would ever have arrived at the ſummit of civilization; whether they would not have rather have ſat down contented, at ſome intermediate ſtage, as the far greater part of the natives of the eaſtern continent had done before them. The journey was long, and they had not proceeded far, in a courſe of three hundred years, which had elapſed between the foundation of their empire and its final diſſolution by the arrival of the Spaniards.

LET. II.

niards. The preſumption is, I think, that they would not have travelled many ſtages farther; ſince it is almoſt certain that they had been ſtationary, at leaſt one century prior to the cataſtrophe of their ſtate.

Theſe facts, my Lord, I have collected for your peruſal, and moſt of them, for aught I know, are well authenticated. I would not however, be inflexibly poſitive in matters of ſo dark, and ſo diſtant antiquity. In ſome of the inſtances, I may poſſibly be miſtaken—the conſequences I deduce may ſometimes be erroneous—I may at times have viewed antiquity through a falſe medium—Perhaps I may entertain too mean on opinion of our ſpecies; or

or may have formed too confined ideas of our intellectual powers—I may have attributed to one elevated genius, improvements, inventions, inſtitutions, religious, moral and political, which, in reality, ſprung, in a ſeries of ages, from the gradual openings and unfoldings of human reaſon, urged by neceſſity, fired with ambition, ſtimulated by avarice, and, perhaps, in a few heroic ſpirits, animated by benevolence to mankind. I would willingly avoid the imputation of dogmatiſm—I only propoſe doubts; I hope, not in the ſtyle of a ſceptic, but of a candid queriſt, who ſincerely deſires to profit by the anſwer. I deemed it unmannerly, perhaps abſurd, to trouble your Lordſhip with doubts, without, at the ſame time,

LET. II.

LET. II.

producing the reaſons that ſuggeſted them. This idea drew me into the preceding and following details, which I judged indiſpenſable, in order to give you a diſtinct conception of the elucidations which might tend to remove them.

After this apology, (which, by a perſon of your Lordſhip's candor and humanity, may perhaps be thought ſuperfluous) we will, if you pleaſe, proceed to examine the ſentiments of the ancients with regard to the character of the primitive race of men. If it ſhould appear, as I truſt it will, that ſome of the moſt enlightened ſages of antiquity have entertained very favourable opinions of the wiſdom, piety, virtue, and other accompliſhments of the

LET. II.

the men of *other times*, this circumſtance may, it is hoped, add new weight to the obſervations already collected. Of all the ſages of ancient Greece, Plato is allowed to have been moſt intimately acquainted with the traditions of antiquity relating to the character of the firſt race of men. That curious and indefatigable genius [35] is ſaid to have travelled over a great part of the Eaſt, in queſt of knowledge and information relating to ancient times. [36] It is well known that he gleaned his moſt ſublime, as well as his moſt orthodox opinions concerning the nature of the

35 Diog. Laert. Vit. Philos. L. III. pag. 190. et ſeq. —Stanley's Lives of the Phil. 4to. part V. page 164.

36 Inſtead of quoting from Plato every paſſage connected with the ſubject under conſideration, I ſhall beg leave to refer your Lordſhip, once for all, to Gale's Court of the Gentiles, Vol. II. Book 3, Chap. 3, page 238, &c.

LET. II. Deity, the formation of the Univerſe, the character and offices of Demons or ſubordinate Intelligences, the creation of Man, the conduct of Providence in the adminiſtration of human affairs, from Oriental traditions. According to him, 'the ancients dwelt 'nearer the gods than we, i. e. than 'his contemporaries—they underſtood 'the nature of the gods much more 'intimately than thoſe who came after '—they were better acquainted with 'the eſſential properties of things, and, 'conſequently, better qualified for 'impoſing names ſuitable to their na-'ture." His Μυθοι (Fables) which are, generally, of oriental extraction, appear with a venerable air of antiquity, which diffuſes a ſuperior majeſty around him, and communicates authority to his prin-

principles and opinions. Indeed, my Lord, that great Philoſopher never mentions the moſt ancient race of men, without the moſt enthuſiaſtic encomiums on their knowledge, virtue, piety, and wiſdom.* LET. II.

Nor was the *divine* Plato ſingular in this mode of thinking. All the ſages of Greece downward to [37] Ariſtotle, paid the higheſt regard to the maxims, opinions, principles, and traditions of the ancients. Such were the ſentiments of the [38] wiſe men of Greece

* Before the art of writing was univerſally practiſed, Tradition was much more infallible than at preſent, eſpecially in the Eaſt.

37 That Philoſopher was the firſt who endeavoured to diſgrace the traditions of the Ancients, judging it unbecoming a Philoſopher to admit any dogmas not founded on reaſoning.

38 The Atomic Philoſophy, the Parent of the Savage State, was not introduced into Greece at that early period.

with

LET. II.

with regard to the improvements of the original race of men: ſentiments ſo evidently repugnant to the idea of a Savage State, that, on the contrary, they ſeem to imply a ſtate of the higheſt cultivation and improvement. Wiſdom, virtue, a profound veneration for every thing ſacred, are characters incompatible with a ſtate of ignorance, anarchy, and univerſal degeneracy, the inſeparable attendants of the empire of Savagiſm. Your Lordſhip will not, I flatter myſelf, contend, that theſe luminaries of Greece were either partial, or ill informed, when they tranſmitted theſe dogmas to poſterity. The ſanctity of their character ſecures them from every ſuſpicion of the former as the advantages of their ſituation enabled them to guard againſt the latter. They lived

lived at a period not very diſtant from the ages which they diſtinguiſh by theſe flattering deſcriptions. No one can doubt of their inclination, abilities, or opportunities of informing themſelves of every thing relating to the temper, genius, and characteriſtical features of the perſons and ages which they celebrate.

Theſe honourable ſentiments with reſpect to the primitive men, were by no means confined to the ſchools of Philoſophy. It was, my Lord, an univerſal opinion—it extended as far and wide as the population of mankind. Among the Orientals; who have always been tenacious of every thing ancient, a veneration for the primitive ages has univerſally obtained. The maxims,

LET. II.

maxims, opinions, laws, cuſtoms, inſtitutions, and even the ſayings of the Fathers have ever been looked up to with reverence and partiality. The Jewiſh hiſtory, every where, abounds with expreſſions importing the high eſtimation in which the wiſdom of the ancients was held by the greateſt and wiſeſt men of that nation. It would be ſuperfluous to obſerve to one of your Lordſhip's univerſal acquaintance with the manners, cuſtoms and opinions of nations, that all the writers of ancient times, in every department, are full of the like acknowledgments. Theſe repeated appeals from the *common ſenſe* of the preſent, to the *common ſenſe* of ages long paſt, imply a perſuaſion of the ſuperior wiſdom and ingenuity of the latter. Now, if this were

were the univerſal opinion, as I verily believe it was, till a race of conceited dogmatiſts forced it off the ſtage, the original ſtate of mankind muſt have been the very reverſe of that held up to the world by ſome of the *beaux eſprits* of this and the preceding century. LET. II.

As long as the genuine and unſophiſticated tradition concerning the formation of the univerſe, the creation of man, the immortality of the human ſoul, and the divine adminiſtration was univerſally believed, it was, one would think, almoſt impoſſible for mankind to have lapſed into the Savage State. In proceſs of time, however, theſe traditional truths were either adulterated or entirely forgotten, among men

LET. II.

men who did not like to retain God in their knowledge. Scepticiſm now began to rear it's deteſted head, and to renounce and ridicule the ſacred remains of truth, which had been firmly believed, and religiouſly revered by preceding generations. [39] It was then Philoſophy undertook to fabricate an Univerſe upon mechanical principles. This *rational ſyſtem*, as it has been ſtyled by it's votaries of modern times, ſoon acquired extenſive influence, and became highly reputable. It was a mode calculated to flatter the innate vanity of the human heart, by extolling and magnifying it's powers and capacities. Men of metaphyſical heads and corrupt

39 Odacon was the great Apoſtle of the Chaldeans, as Thoth or Thyoth was of the Egyptians and Phœnicians. See Beroſus ap. Alex. Poly hiſt. Euſeb. P. E. Lib. I. Cap. Selden de Diis Syr. Synt. 2 Cap. 3. p. 190.

and

and ambitious hearts undertook to point out a plan upon which an univerſe might be fabricated, without the intervention of any active power ſuperior to *matter* and *motion*, which, according to them, exiſted from eternity. This globe once formed, men and other animals were generated from their mother Earth, and ſprung up fatherleſs, in a fatherleſs world. It would have been ſomething more than a miracle if theſe *earth-born brothers* had not made their firſt appearance in a ſtate conformable to their mongrel origin. LET. II.

Here, my Lord, we ſee a competition is ſtarted between modern philoſophy and ancient tradition. We have ſeen the very hopeful and digni-

fied

LET. II.

fied reſult of the former; let us now trace the humble and unaſſuming dictates of the latter. She tells us, that Man was 'the immediate workmanſhip of Heaven—created after the 'image of his Maker—who placed him 'in a civilized ſtate—who educated 'his beloved offſpring, in a manner 'ſuitable to his heavenly extraction—'taught him the ſublime principles of 'Religion and Morality—conſtituted 'him in a ſocial condition; a condition 'conformable to the inſtincts of his 'rational nature, which qualified him 'for giving and receiving pleaſure and 'improvement from a ſocial intercourſe 'with thoſe of his ſpecies.' We may ſay of this doctrine what Cicero ſaid of the immortality of the human ſoul, if it is not true, 'tis pity it ſhould not,

since every wise man would most devoutly wish it. Thus much, my Lord, for ancient philosophy, and the voice of tradition still more ancient. Let us now consult the bards of antiquity on this question. LET. II.

The most ancient poets, your Lordship knows, have some where or other, perhaps in the [40] east, lighted on a tale about the four ages of the world. This tale is undoubtedly as old as Orpheus. Linus, Musæus, and succeeding poets, have, I believe, copied it from his poems [41]. Hesiod has described the characters of the people

[40] The east was the native land of allegory, and consequently most of the Μυθοι of the Greeks came from thence.

[41] Εργ: και ημιξ l. I. ver. 130. Arat. Phœnom. v. 113.

LET. II. who lived in theſe ages, reſpectively. In ſhort, both Greek and Latin poets delineate the happineſs of the golden age with a pomp of expreſſion and luxuriance of imagery, which gave the earth, at that bleſt period, the air of a Mahometan paradiſe. This tradition, like moſt others relating to the original ſtate of the world, was current among the moſt celebrated nations of the eaſt. The reign of the gods and [42] demi-gods in Egypt, evidently point out the golden and ſilver ages, in that country, as the reign of the heroes, and mortals does the brazen and iron periods. That the Babylonians had a notion of the like diviſion, is probable from the image in [43] Nebu-

42 Africanus ap. Euſeb. Chron. pag. 7, alſo Syncellus.
43 Dam. ch. II. Alexander Polyhiſtor.

chadnezar's

chadnezar's dream. Among the Perſians, the reign of [44] Oromaſd, before that Ariman rebelled and brought miſery into the world, alludes to the ſame opinion. The Bramins and

LET. II.

44 Diod. Sic. l. II. pag. 88, Steph. Herod l. III. cap. 100, et ſeq. Philoſtrati vita Apol. l. III. pag. 125, Cteſiæ excerpta de Indicis Herodoto adjecta ex Photio, pag. 659. Dionyſius towards the end of his Periegeſis has a noble encomium on the Indians. It is a panegyric worthy of the ſublimity of Homer. It has been tranſlated by Mr. Bryant, author of the Analyſis of ancient Mythology; and the tranſlation, if poſſible, excels the original. As I am ſure your Lordſhip will be charmed with it, I ſhall tranſcribe as much of it, as is connected with the preſent ſubject. ver. 1070.

Αυτοι γαρ και πρωτα διμειλιατορωσαντα, &c.

'Theſe were the firſt great founders in the world,
'Founders of cities, and of mighty ſtates:
'Who ſhew'd a path through ſeas, before unknown:
'And, when doubt reign'd, and dark uncertainty,
'Who render'd life more certain. They firſt view'd
'The ſtarry lights, and form'd them into ſchemes.
'In the firſt ages, when the ſons of men
'Knew not what way to turn them, they aſſign'd
'To each his juſt department: they beſtow'd
'Of land a portion, and of ſea a lot,
'And ſent each wand'ring tribe far off to ſhare
'A diff'rent ſoil, and climate——Hence aroſe
'The great diverſity ſo plainly ſeen
'Mid' nations widely ſever'd——'

LET. II. Gymnoſophiſts of India talk of an early period, when all was innocence, harmony and happineſs. I know, my Lord, that *Vox populi* is not always *Vox Dei*; you will, however agree with me, that the poets muſt have found ſuch an opinion eſtabliſhed, at leaſt among the vulgar, before they adopted it: and I cannot help thinking that the authority of tradition is highly reſpectable, when it is probable, univerſal, and uninterrupted. From this fourfold diviſion of the ages of the world, one may, I think, infer, firſt, that the notion of a golden age, in the earlieſt periods of time, is repugnant to that of the Savage State: ſecondly that this quadruple arrangement plainly indicates an idea of a tendency toward degeneracy; an idea which

which is founded on fact, and univer- LET. II.
ſal experience.

The moſt finiſhed and the moſt exalted inſtitutions, have always degenerated almoſt as ſoon as they have been committed to the adminiſtration of men. The moſt perfect modes of government—the moſt rational, and moſt refined ſyſtems of philoſophy—the moſt pure and moſt heavenly doctrines of religion, have ſcarce ſooner fallen into the hands of human inſtruments, than they have caught an infection from the corruption of man, and begun to decline from their primary and native ſimplicity. The Chriſtian inſtitution, though of all others, the moſt perfect, was early ſophiſticated with the moſt abominable

LET. II.

herefies. In the courſe of a few centuries it was interlarded with a mixture of the moſt crude, and ſhocking abſurdities that ever were obtruded on the credulity of mankind. Your Lordſhip muſt, certainly, have obſerved, that not one of the ſects, that during half a century paſt have ſeparated from the eſtabliſhed Church, in our own country, have long maintained that ſcrupulouſly ſanctified exterior which they aſſumed on their firſt ſetting out. The fervor of enthuſiaſm, which then warmed their breaſts, is now, in a great meaſure, evaporated; the ſpirit which ſtrengthened their religious exertions is withdrawn, and they are now become wicked and weak as other men. This, my Lord, has been the fate of all refor-

reformations; of paganiſm to chriſtianity—of popery to *proteſtantiſm*, of ſavagiſm to civilization. Every political ſyſtem, every religious inſtitution, labours under the ſame fundamental defect. In the civil, as in the natural body, the diſeaſe which draws on its diſſolution, is interwoven with its original frame and contexture.

This obſervation, your Lordſhip will ſay, is a very common one, but the uſe to which I would wiſh to apply it, is not perhaps altogether ſo hackneyed. I have often been tempted to imagine that there are in the human conſtitution not a few grains of the *vis inertiæ*; a certain innate liſtleſſneſs, which clogs its motions, and retards its *impetus* in its courſe of

LET. II.

progreſſive and gradual improvements; that, in general, the application of ſome external impulſe is neceſſary, to awaken its exertions, to enable it to overcome the natural reſiſtance inherent in the mind, and to communicate a *momentum* in ſome determinate career. At the ſame time, my Lord, I am far from imagining that man is incapable of putting his active powers in motion. I know the [45] faculties will break forth into exerciſe, but am not altogether ſo poſitive as to the line of direction. Be that as it may, I believe one thing is almoſt certain, that, if man, at the

45 The ſavage tribes often diſplay abundance of activity; but that activity is generally employed in procuring the means of ſubſiſtence, ſecuring themſelves and annoying their enemies; ingenious inventions which lead to civilization are never their object.

very

very ακμη of 'perfection, is ſo little 'able, or, perhaps, ſo little willing to 'perſevere in that ſtate; or, rather, if 'he diſcovers ſuch a violent propen-'ſion to go down hill', it ſhould follow, according to the rules of analogy, that his efforts to climb up the ſteep are neither ſo vigorous, nor ſo perſevering as the Mirrors of modern philoſophy would have us imagine. Nay, from the appearances juſt now exhibited, I am inclined to harbour a ſuſpicion that the human powers frequently move in a retrograde direction. Upon theſe principles, my Lord, it is eaſy enough to conceive, how man once civilized, in a certain degree, may relapſe into the ſavage, or, at leaſt, into the barbarous ſtate; but

LET. II.

LET. II.

but the oppoſite idea is by no means ſo natural. The former 'may be 'compared to a veſſel ſailing down 'the ſtream, with a favorable gale; 'the latter is like rowing againſt the 'tide when the veſſel is clumſy, the 'rowers unhandy, and the pilot unſkil-'ful.'

My Lord, it would be entertaining, poſſibly edifying, could we inveſtigate the ſtate of religion, in the earlieſt ſtages of ſociety. In one part of the world, at leaſt, we find religious inſtitutions eſtabliſhed, even before the annals of hiſtory exiſted. Idolatry overſpread the globe at a very early period. How, or by whom, does not belong to the preſent inquiry. The firſt

firſt and moſt general objects of that worſhip, were the [46] luminaries of heaven, the elements, the [47] fruits of the earth, [48] rivers, fountains, animals, &c. This poſition cannot, I believe, be the ſubject of controverſy; but what follows may poſſibly give riſe to objections. I have always entertained an opinion that the primitive men were ſo far from the Savage State, that, on the contrary, they were highly diſtinguiſhed by their piety and virtue. As this opinion may ſeem paradoxical, I ſhall beg leave to aſſign the reaſons which determined me to embrace it.

46 Euſeb. Prep. Evang. l. I. cap. 5, pag. 18, Steph.
47 Id. ibid. Plutarch Iſis and Oſiris, paſſ.
48 Max. Tyrius, Sermo 38 pag. 479. The Egyptians worſhipped the Nile, the Germans the Rhine, &c.

LET. II.

If my Lord, the world, or, indeed, any conſiderable part, was overwhelmed with a deluge, what, think you, would have been the moſt natural conſequence of this dreadful cataſtrophe, with reſpect to the few who had the good fortune to ſurvive? It muſt, certainly, have made a deep and laſting impreſſion on their minds. A world of profligates ſwept away almoſt inſtantaneouſly—the wreck of a convulſed globe perpetually before their eyes—the mercy and miracle of their own perſervation, and many other circumſtances, eaſy to be imagined, muſt have conſpired to animate their devotion, and to preſerve a ſenſe of deity on their minds. The conſideration of their own eſcape, while all their brethren of man-

mankind were ſwept off the earth, with the beſom of deſtruction, muſt have warmed their hearts, with the moſt rapturous gratitude to that benign power, to whoſe gracious interpoſition they might be diſpoſed to aſcribe their deliverance. This merciful diſpenſation would not, I ſuppoſe, be placed to the chapter of accidents. It would, ſurely, be aſcribed to a ſupernatural cauſe—ſome divinity, real or imaginary would, certainly, be deemed the author of the event. In circumſtances ſo affecting, and, at the ſame time, ſo deeply intereſting, devotion muſt have been animated with the laſt fervor of gratitude. The impreſſion would not be quickly obliterated; it would be carefully tranſmitted from father to ſon, through many

LET. II.

many ſucceſſive generations; religion would, of courſe, become the tone of the times, as was the caſe with the firſt Proſelytes to Chriſtianity. This modification of character would be ſtill more perceptible, in proportion as temporal deliverances always operate more powerfully on the minds of mankind, than ſpiritual bleſſings, though far more excellent, and ſuperior in their nature. Men might, indeed, miſtake the object of their worſhip, but ſtill the ſenſe of religious duties communicated from generation to generation would influence their conduct, to what object ſoever their worſhip might be directed. It has always been found, that a quick ſenſe of duty operating on the mind has a powerful influence to control the paſſions,

passions, to regulate the conduct, and to humanize the tempers of men. If then the existence of a deluge is admitted, and the impression such a calamity must, of necessity, have made on the minds of the survivors is indisputable; and if, at the same time, it cannot be denied, that a sense of religion has a natural tendency to produce the effects attributed to it in the foregoing deduction, it will follow, by a natural, and necessary consequence, that the state immediately succeeding the deluge must have been civilized, in a very high degree. LET. II.

Before I dismiss the article of religion, I must intreat your Lordship's patience a very few minutes, while I throw together a few additional

LET. II. obſervations, which, I flatter myſelf, will operate as collateral evidences in ſupport of the poſition I have been labouring to eſtabliſh. They are not, I confeſs, of the nature of hiſtorical facts; and yet I apprehend, that ſomething even more cogent, and more palpable than theſe, may reſult from the light they may throw upon the ſubject.

In many parts of the world, more eſpecially, in the Eaſt, we diſcover an infinite number of proper names compoſed of terms importing ſome attribute of the deity. The Jews were a religious, perhaps, a ſuperſtitious people. Among them, names of perſons, places, offices, and dignities, generally allude to ſome epithet of the

the Almighty. As theſe people were favoured with a ſupernatural revelation, perhaps no great ſtreſs may be laid upon their practice. But we ſhall find upon enquiry, that the ſame cuſtom was adopted by other nations, which, for aught we know, never enjoyed any ſuch advantage. LET. II.

The Canaanites, whom the Jews partly diſpoſſeſſed, had ſignalized their zeal for the pagan idolatry by denominating [49] cities, villages, mountains, groves, rivers, &c. from the titles and epithets of their imaginary deities. Egypt was the native ſeat of idolatry.

49 *En ſhemeſh* the fountain of the Sun, *Bethſhan* the temple of the Sun, *Baal Gad* the city of Baal i. e. the Sun and the hoſt of heaven. *Aſhtaroth Karnaim* Luna Bicornis, *Ethbaal* the ſtrength of Baal, *Jezabel or Jobabel* the ſalvation of Baal. *Baal Herman*, and numberleſs others.

LET. II.

Accordingly, in that country, every [50] city, every village, every town bore the name of ſome deity, or of ſome animal ſacred to a deity. [51] The Phœnician mariners, in the courſe of their diſcoveries, almoſt always denominated iſlands, coaſts, promontories, harbours, and other remarkable places, from ſome attribute, or epithet, or circumſtance relating to the objects of the religion of their country. My Lord, I have this moment before me a roll of names collected for the purpoſe which would carry us round a great part of the globe. This would be a tedious and troubleſome circuit; and I apprehend your Lordſhip will

50 See Diod. Sic. l. i. Herod. l. ii. Plut. Iſis, Oſiris, paſſ.

51 This might be proved by the etymology of many places in Phœnicia, on the coaſts of Africa, and Spain, Italy, Greece, Aſia minor, &c.

rather

rather condeſcend to give me credit for its authenticity, than engage in an etymological diſcuſſion, which would neither prove entertaining nor intereſting. I ſhall therefore, inſtead of this, refer you to the [52] authors quoted below, and rather beg leave to have recourſe once more to analogical reaſoning. LET. II.

When the Spaniards, in the 15th and 16th centuries, made their diſcoveries in South America, every remarkable place where they touched, in the courſe of their voyages, was dignified with the name of ſome angel, ſaint, martyr, confeſſor, &c. Every place where they landed, erected a fort, built a city, village, or hamlet,

[52] Bryant's Analyſis of ancient Mythology, Gebelin's Monde Primitif, D. Muſgrave, &c.

LET. II.

bore the name of ſome real or ideal perſon who figures in the Roman calendar, or of ſome object connected with the catholic faith. The Portugueſe adopted the very ſame plan, in denominating their ſettlements on the coaſt of Africa, in Brazil, and in the Eaſt. Now, my Lord, let us ſuppoſe a period ſhould one day arrive, when the exploits and national character of the Spaniards and Portugueſe ſhall be as little known, as thoſe of the Tyrians and Phœnicians are at preſent; would not poſterity, all at once, conclude, that the two nations, juſt mentioned, were, at the time when thoſe names were impoſed, a very devout, or, at leaſt, a very ſuperſtitious, but, by no means a ſavage, or even barbarous race of men?

To

LET. II.

To corroborate the hypotheſis of the religious, perhaps ſuperſtitious, character of the primitive men, I muſt beg leave to obſerve, that many of the honorary terms among the eaſtern nations, appropriated in the moſt early ages, and retained to this day, are actually borrowed from the functions of religion. That the office of king and prieſt were, in the moſt early times, united in the ſame perſon, is univerſally known. Princes, in ancient times, were proud of the ſacerdotal character, conſequently, titles of the moſt dignified import were often aſſumed from that function. This profound reſpect for the miniſtrations of religion ſeems to me, an indubitable proof that the people who lived in thoſe early ages were deeply tinctured with a ſenſe of

LET. II. religion, and conſequently muſt have made conſiderable improvements in a ſocial and civilized mode of life.

Let us now, if your Lordſhip pleaſes, deſcend to the heroic age, where again we ſhall find the ſtrongeſt indications of the like religious character. Homer, your Lordſhip well knows, abounds with miracles and divine interpoſitions. Scarce a ſingle hero performs an exploit without the aid of ſome benign, tutelar deity. 'Tis true, his machinery is often injudiciouſly employed, his gods are too often inveſted with qualities, according to our ideas, extravagant and moſt notoriouſly inconſiſtent. This circumſtance, however, will not contribute in the leaſt to impair the force of the inference I would

would propoſe to deduce from it. LET. II.
Your Lordſhip will agree with me, that it ſtrongly marks the devotional complexion of the perſonages who are brought upon the ſtage in the courſe of the action. I have heard it remarked by retailers of petty criticiſm, that Homer, by conſtantly calling in ſupernatural aſſiſtance, in a great meaſure robs his heroes of the honour of their exploits. But it ought to be obſerved, that, in the age of Homer, and, perhaps, ſome ages later, the very higheſt honour a mortal could attain to, was to be reputed the favourite ward of ſome particular deity, who was imagined to ſtand always at his right hand, to conduct, aſſiſt, and protect him. In theſe ages, the belief of a particular, ſuperintending Providence

LET. II.

ſeems to have been vigorous and univerſal. The divine agency was ſuppoſed to extend even to the moſt trivial and unimportant occurrences. More eſpecially, *nihil magnum niſi divinum* was a fundamental article of the pagan creed; princes and heroes choſe for their patrons, particular divinities, and were proud of being reputed the peculiar favourites, and diſtinguiſhed care of ſome powerful guardian of the celeſtial race. Theſe were the tutelar ſaints of the times. To be connected with theſe, and, in the opinion of the vulgar, to enjoy their protection, was ambitiouſly courted by the great and the powerful. In this light, my Lord, the machinery of Homer is by no means extravagant. It may, I own, deduct ſome few grains from the *quantum*

tum of his invention, but goes a great way to ſupport the orthodoxy of his ſyſtem. He wrote as he believed, and his creed was the catholic one. Indeed, all antiquity is full of oracles, prophecies, prodigies, miracles, divine appearances, ſupernatural interpoſitions, and communications. Are not all theſe the genuine offſpring of a temper of mind deeply tinctured with religious enthuſiaſm? Your Lordſhip may, if you pleaſe, call it ſuperſtition; the concluſion will be the ſame. Neither of theſe could have exiſted in your favourite ſtate, with which indeed they are abſolutely incompatible. LET. II.

Your Lordſhip muſt often have obſerved, that no ties bind men more cloſely together, than thoſe which are formed

LET. II.

formed by the profeſſion of one common religion. People, who are connected by ſimilarity of ſentiments, in matters of religion, are alas! too often wolves to the reſt of mankind; but to the elect of their own communion they are, for the moſt part, meek and forgiving, even to a fault. We will then ſuppoſe that all the members of the family, or families, were of one religion, as well as of one language. Upon this ſuppoſition, a ſociety was eſtabliſhed upon ſuch a baſis, and in ſuch circumſtances, as leave no room for the exiſtence of the ſavage or even of a barbarous ſtate.

My Lord, a ſenſe of common danger uſually unites men: we have ſeen a common eſcape produce nearly the

the ſame effect. The happy few who eſcaped the general deluge would, of courſe, unite their endeavours in promoting the public weal. In ſuch circumſtances, the ties of conſanguinity being out of the queſtion, the common intereſt would form a ſocial cement, ſtrong and durable enough to unite the members of the family into one inſeparable horde. I know that the patrons of the ſavage ſtate are zealous advocates for the natural influence of the ſocial principle. In the preſent caſe, it would operate ſo powerfully as to prevent all poſſibility of the exiſtence of that ſtate which your Lordſhip, and thoſe of your party, ſo ſtrenuouſly contend for. In other caſes, where the connecting ingredient above-mentioned is wanting, I doubt, whether

LET. II. whether the aſſociating *ſtorge* would allure men in the ſavage ſtate to herd together in numerous ſocieties. And yet ſuch an arrangement is allowed to be neceſſary, before it is poſſible for men to arrive at the civilized ſtate.

I cannot determine whether it may not be owing to ſome unlucky prejudices I may have imbibed in the early time of life; but I muſt acknowledge, I have always ſuſpected that the ſocial inſtinct, the innate propenſity towards *banding together*, is not altogether ſo vigorous in man, as is generally imagined. Savages do indeed affect their own family, their own tribe, and their own horde. But whether this indication of a ſocial diſpoſition flows from the innate bias of the mind

mind towards a friendly intercourſe with their own ſpecies, is not ſo eaſy to determine. Perhaps it may ſpring from that inſtinct implanted in man, by which he is prompted to affect his kindred, his connexions, and thoſe whom he imagines deſcended of the ſame ſtock with himſelf. LET. II.

We know that in many countries, clanſhips do ſtill ſubſiſt. In theſe countries or cantons, a chimerical notion has always prevailed, that all who go by one common ſurname, or inhabit the ſame tract of country, are deſcended of one common parent. Among people who cheriſh this fooliſh idea, the ſocial affections are always confined within the narrow circle of their own tribe, or ſect. With them all

LET. II.

all without are uncircumciſed and unclean. If they are not deemed enemies, they are, at moſt, regarded with an eye of indifference. From this unlucky ſymptom, which I take for a general one, I am led to entertain doubts whether the operation of the ſocial appetites, among ſavages, is not the offſpring of a whimſical idea of conſanguinity, or of the ſocial compact.

Mr. Hobbes and his predeceſſors were conſiſtent throughout. They laid the foundation of human ſociety in *Self-love*. Men, ſay they, banded together for mutual defence. [53] 'They

[53] Diod. Sic. l. i. page 5. Steph. The doctrines of *Self-love* and *Benevolence* have, ſome years ago, been new modelled, and reduced to plauſible ſyſtems. They have been held up as the ſources of morality and the criterions of virtuous actions, in the ſame manner as poets do, when they put a part for the whole.

'united

'united their efforts with a view to LET. II.
'repel dangers, and assist each other in
'procuring the necessary means of sub-
'sistence. Their experience of the ad-
'vantages which individuals derived
'from the combined exertions of the
'*multitude* was the true cement of their
'federal union, and the stimulus that
'goaded them on to perform good
'offices, reciprocally, to each other.'
The passion of *fear* would co-operate with *self-love*, to allure your *savage* men into the social compact. We every day see the dread of impending dangers terrify men into treaties and compacts, whom, without that impelling motive, nothing but the *grave could have united.* Benevolence, my Lord, is the instinct of heroic and sublimated spirits; and these are not over numerous

LET. II.

merous among the children of men. It is an affection by much too exalted, too noble, and too refined to animate the breaſt of the ſavages of the deſart. The fear of the preſent, or the preſentiment of future danger may impel them to aſſociate; the proſpect of advantage may operate to unite them: benevolence and inſtinctive attachment to promote the happineſs of their fellow men, I am perſuaded, never would. Fear, neceſſity, ſelf-intereſt, have ever been the motives to union among ſavages. Theſe are cauſes adequate to the ſuppoſed effect, and correſpond exactly with the character of the parties aſſociating.

It would be ſtrange, I think *paſſing ſtrange*, to contemplate a herd of vagabond

bond ſavages inſpired with warm benevolent affections, and theſe too, ſtrong enough to allure them into ſocial compacts, and by theſe means, to lay the foundation of the moſt noble and the moſt refined, and, at the ſame time, of the moſt difficult civil improvements. Some crazy poet might, I own, ſketch off ſuch a picture, but a philoſopher would apply the *Humano capiti cervicem, &c.* Union among ſavages is built upon the ſame foundation with aſſociations among robbers, freebooters, pirates, and gypſies. Intereſt, fear, neceſſity, mutual defence, even among civilized men, are the moſt powerful ties of ſocial combinations. The ſame muſt be the caſe, *a fortiori*, among ſavages. As long, my Lord, as *Hoſtis* imported an *enemy*

LET. II.

and a *ſtranger*, there was little probability that men would conquer their inſtinctive antipathies ſo entirely, as ſpontaneouſly to ſubmit to the reſtraints of laws, and of courſe to form ſuch numerous and extenſive communities as are, according to the hypotheſis, moſt happily calculated for promoting refinement and civilization among men. Animals, with all the untoward diſpoſitions about them, which are known to characterize ſavages, at this day, would, in all appearance, feel no very ſtrong *penchant* towards uniting in ſocial intercourſe, more eſpecially if they were apprized that the loſs of their natural independance was to be the price of their admiſſion. The conſequence is obvious.

LET II.

It muſt be acknowledged, were the ſocial inſtinct in ſavages active enough to draw them into populous and extenſive communities, their progreſs towards civilization would not, perhaps, be altogether ſo deſperate. But beſides that the exiſtence of this inſtinct is doubtful, it is I think certain, beyond a poſſibility of doubt, that civil ſocieties did not owe their original to that ſocial inſtinct, but to other cauſes of a very different complexion. What theſe cauſes were your Lordſhip need not be informed.

When I look on theſe ſtrictures on the influence of the *Social Inſtinct*, I find they have very much the air of a digreſſion; I would hope your Lordſhip may rather view them in the light of

LET. II.

an *Epiſode*. They are not, indeed, eſſentially neceſſary for carrying on the argument, but are, however, connected with the ſubject, and ſeem naturally to ſpring out of it.

Theſe, my Lord, are the objections, at leaſt the principal ones, which have occurred to me in peruſing your hypotheſis relating to the univerſal prevalence of the ſavage ſtate, in the earlieſt ages of the world. I hope you will rather view them in the light of doubts than objections. Such as they are, I would humbly ſubmit them to your Lordſhip's conſideration. I have been rather more liberal of my quotations in this Letter than in the former. This arrangement, I beg leave to aſſure your Lordſhip, did, by no means,

proceed from any idea I had formed of being able to communicate any new information to a perſon of your Lordſhip's extenſive acquaintance with books, as well as men. The references at the bottom of the pages (for they are not properly quotations) were ſubjoined, ſolely with a view to authenticate the poſitions advanced in the courſe of the argument. If a little vanity has unperceived inſinuated itſelf, your good nature will readily apply the ſarcaſm of ——.

Scire tuum nihil eſt, niſi te ſcire hoc ſciat alter.

Foreign ideas have ſometimes been admitted, in the progreſs of the argument. Theſe were admitted for two reaſons; either to amuſe your Lord-

LET. II.

ſhip in the courſe of the peruſal, if you ſhould happen to give yourſelf that trouble; or to elucidate and confirm the obſervations thrown out.

And now, my Lord, in order to ſpare your Lordſhip the trouble of a ſecond peruſal of theſe trifles, ſhould you ever be condeſcending enough to give them a firſt, I ſhall try to condenſe them within ſuch a narrow compaſs, that you may be able to comprehend them, as it were d'un coup d'ceil.

1ſt, The more populous and extenſive kingdoms and ſocieties were civilized, at a period prior to the records of hiſtory: the preſumption there-

therefore is that theſe were civilized from the beginning.

2d, No people who were once in a cultivated ſtate, and, in proceſs of time, degenerated into the ſavage or barbarous ſtate, have ever recovered their priſtine condition, without foreign aid. This furniſhes a preſumptive argument, that man, once a ſavage, would never have raiſed himſelf from that hopeleſs ſtate.

3d, None of the nations which were ſavages or barbarians, at the period of their firſt appearance in hiſtory, have ever been known to move one ſtep forward towards a civilized ſtate, 'till impelled by ſome external circumſtance; a phœnomenon which does not ſeem

LET. II. to favour the progreſſive motion of the human ſpecies towards a ſtate of civilization.

4th, There appears in ſavages a natural and rooted averſion to a civilized ſtate. This furniſhes a ſtrong preſumption, that, by the efforts of their natural genius alone, they never would have raiſed themſelves above their original character.

5th, The moſt judicious and the moſt enlightened ſages of antiquity entertained the moſt exalted notions of the piety, virtue, wiſdom, and juſtice of the primitive men. Theſe great men neither wanted inclination, nor means of information, nor indeed abilities to diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood. If

we can depend upon their opinion, there muſt always have exiſted, in ſome region of the globe, a ſociety of civilized people.

6th, The idea of a ſtate of univerſal ſavagiſm ſeems to have ſprung from the chimerical coſmogonies of *Mochus*, *Democritrus*, *Epicurus*, *&c.* Theſe coſmogonies, nor the conſequences of them, were never admitted by the wiſe and ſober ſects of philoſophers.

7th, The notion of a *Golden age* which, at one time, univerſally prevailed, is inconſiſtent with the univerſal extent of the empire of ſavagiſm.

8th, There

LET. II.

8th, There ſeems to be in human nature, an innate propenſity towards degeneracy, even in a ſtate of the higheſt improvement. The conſequence is obvious.

9th, The period immediately ſucceeding the deluge, if ſuch an event actually took place, muſt have been remarkable for piety. The ſenſe of duty and a divine providence muſt have been deeply impreſſed upon the minds of men, and that impreſſion muſt, for ſome ages, have prevented the patriarchs from falling into the ſavage ſtate.

10th, Civilization and improvements of every kind have always been carried to the higheſt pitch of perfection

tion in large and populous ſocieties. In ſavages, the ſocial appetite never reaches beyond their own ſept, or horde, and, conſequently, is too weak and too confined to diſpoſe them to unite into large communities, and, of courſe, had all mankind been once in the ſavage ſtate, they never could have arrived at any conſiderable degree of civilization. LET. II.

In the earlieſt ages all over the globe, we meet with names of perſons, places, offices, dignities, alluding to, or formed from, names, epithets, attributes, of the Deity, or, at leaſt, from objects of religious worſhip. This appearance indicates a devout turn of mind, and conſequently a ſtate of things

LET. II. things greatly ſuperior to that which is contended for by the gentlemen of your Lordſhip's party.

The religious enthuſiaſm of the ages of heroiſm was certainly derived from the devotional character of the primitive men, which is a proof almoſt demonſtrative, that ſavagiſm was not the original ſtate of mankind.

I flatter myſelf, your Lordſhip will find this epitome contains, pretty exactly, the poſitions laid down in the preceding pages. I could have wiſhed the whole had been more correct, and of a little higher poliſh, with reſpect to the ſtyle and manner. If the ſentiments are juſt, and the reaſoning perſpicuous,

ſpicuous, I depend upon your Lord- LET. II.
ſhip's candour for the reſt; and am,

My LORD,

With the greateſt reſpect,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt obedient, and

Moſt humble ſervant.

4 NO 54